

## VICAR'S LENTEN MESSAGE 2007



My Dear Brother s and Sisters:

On many occasions, we have the tendency of embracing the joyous rather than the sad and painful times. We are tempted to celebrate the festivities of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, forgetting that there is the rest of Lent and last days of our Lord's life during Holy Week. To accept such a concept is to promote grace in a cheap way. Throughout our Lenten journey, we walk with Jesus to the Cross at Calvary.

This journey reminds us that we are to humble ourselves before God - admitting that we need God and are totally inadequate without Him, recognizing that we could not acquire our salvation without Him, and emptying ourselves of false pride and pretense so as to become righteous in His sight. For too often we want to display a perfect persona thinking that life will be perfect when in fact it isn't.

Thus, prayer is so vital to our lives in that it helps us to relinquish ourselves and submit to God in openness and love. Prayer helps us to hear God calling us to himself, to recognize and respond to God's presence in our lives and in the world. A life of prayer helps us to put before God our entire lives - our hopes and our dreams, our needs and our successes, our failures and our fears.

Our Lenten journey begins every year with ashes on Ash Wednesday, a simple reminder of our need to repent and our immortality. As we go along this journey, we can liken it to a tunnel in which we go through darkness but at the end of it, there is light. Yes, for in Lent, we travel towards the darkness of that fateful Good Friday, but we soon come to the light and brightness of Easter Sunday which presents hope, victory and the assurance of eternal life. This journey is spiritual and it is necessary that we make it in order to be spiritually renewed in our lives.

We need to listen to God in ways that we have not heard Him before. We need to do so in deep humility so as to realize His mercy to us when we have fallen short of the glory of God. As God shows His mercy to us, so we should show His mercy to others.

May we allow Lent to be a time of reflection on our own sinfulness, a time to learn gratitude and humility, and a time to truly recognize and appreciate God's love for us. In light of His love for us, God in Christ gave up his own life so that we might have eternal life. We need to demonstrate our gratitude for such a wonderful gift of life in the ways we honor and respect all life.

A Blessed and Holy Lent to you and yours.

Your Friend and Pastor,  
Father Tony