



Dear Parishioners:

In the Old Liturgical Calendar last Sunday was originally referred to as Septuagesima Sunday, marking 70 days before Easter. The purpose of Septuagesima Sunday, and the following two Sundays, was to assist Catholics in making honest preparation for the start of Lent. With this in mind I'd like to share with you my letter from February 16, 2020:

The holy season of Lent is my favorite liturgical season. Why? I think this liturgical season always reminds me that it's time to get serious about my commitment to Jesus and the Church, to the practice of my faith and to reset the priorities in my life. How about you?

One of my favorite commentaries on the Season of Lent comes from a gift I was given back in 1996, the Saint Andrew Bible Missal. I'd like to share the introduction to the season of Lent that can be found in this inspirational liturgical book.

*"For many Catholics Lent revives the memories of days when candy, movies, weddings and other signs of human celebrations were "given up". There is an old sense of Lent as a time of self-imposed penance and asceticism. The explicitly religious expression of the season might have taken the form of weekly stations of the cross and daily Mass. Lent was to be endured.*

*There is a legitimate sense of prayer, asceticism and charity towards neighbor that are authentic hallmarks of the Lenten season. There is a genuine need to identify again with the*

*suffering of Jesus. What is really new for us is the need to see all practices and prayers in the light of the Church's annual retreat in preparation for the Triduum. During those three days new Christians will be born from the font of baptism and all Christians will welcome them with an enthusiasm kindled anew through reliving our own birth in Christ.*

*Lent is first, last and foremost about baptism. Baptism is about going down with Christ unto death and being raised up with him to glory. This death and rising can be celebrated only after it has been experienced and lived in the daily fabric of human life. So Lent is about dying to self for the life of others. Lent is about dying to all human supports, which blind us from seeing that true life is in God alone. Lent is as serious as coming to know that the deepest meanings of human life are seen in Jesus. . ."*

I believe it was Thomas Merton who once wrote that, "*Lent is about rooting out all that is not yet Christ in us.*" That's the goal of preparing for the renewal of our Baptismal Promises on Easter Sunday. Through prayer, fasting, works of charity and other penitential acts we open ourselves to become more like Jesus. It's about removing ourselves from the center of our lives and placing God there. With God as our life's center everything else falls into its proper place.

Don't worry about how far you think you need to go to reach that goal. Just be faithful to the Lenten challenge at hand. Let's do it together!

*Fr. John*