



Lent - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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The 2017 Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1, for Latin-rite Catholics. In a particular way during Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to the spiritual ...

Greetings of peace, dear Franciscan Family!

I pray this finds you well and filled with the peace of the Lord!

Well, it is that glorious time of year again! Our Seraphic Father Francis said that for us, Lent is all year round. Aren't we blessed that for these six weeks, Holy Mother Church will share it with us!

Pope Francis writes in his 2017 Lenten Message: ***"This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord."***

Our Holy Rule also calls us to "daily conversion" (Art. 7), and as I shared at the 2016 Quinquennial, we are not called to mediocrity but we must strive for audacious holiness. Read the **Holy Father's Lenten Message** http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20161018_messaggio-quaresima2017.html.

Please find attached (*links on our [JPIC page](#)*) some goodies for your Lenten pleasure. As in past years, I include my Lenten Season of Peace for you and your fraternity members to pray and enjoy. I also include Lenten resources from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the Michigan Interfaith Power and Light. I also invite you to check out more Lenten resources from Catholic Relief Services <http://www.crsricebowl.org/about/how-to-practice-lent> and the USCCB <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/lent/index.cfm>. All wonderful resources to animate and guide you to a deeper and more just experience with our Lord and all of creation in this blessed season of joy.

"... I was thirsty and you gave me drink..." (Matthew 25:35)

Article 15 of our Holy Rule states: *"Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith."*

One such courageous initiative is our annual **Lenten H2O Project**, an international project to promote Christian solidarity, advocacy and financial support for poor communities in developing nations who have no access to clean drinking water.

For two weeks in Lent, abstain from drinking any beverage except water – preferably tap water, and set aside any money normally spent on sodas and Starbucks. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters who do not even have clean water to drink, we increase our connections and responsibility to poor communities and God's Creation. You can choose to give individually or collectively with your families, fraternities or faith communities.

Please send all contributions to the **H2O Lenten Project 2017**, c/o Jerry Rousseau, 82 Kim St, Blairsville, GA 30512-2345. **Make the check payable to NAFRA – with H2O Project in the memo.**

The recipient of NAFRA H2O Lenten Project 2016 donations went to **TO THE NATIONS**, a missionary project by our brother Stephen Smith, OFS, who leads mission trips to Africa and Latin America to perform spiritual works of mercy. Stephen's mission serves a three-fold purpose: a twinning project with the need for clean water by a Secular Franciscan. How great is our God!

I thank you in advance for your generous contributions and prayers for all people in need of clean water.

I wish you all a very blessed and peace-filled Lenten season!

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