



# Bulletin from the Diocese of Santa Rosa



## ***LENT – A time of prayer, almsgiving and reconciliation***

February 2010

My Dear People,

February 17th is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. On that day, the imposition of ashes is a sign of our commitment to review and renew our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior over the coming forty days. This period of the Church's liturgical year prepares us spiritually for the celebrations of Holy Week when we commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Church offers us a program of penance, prayer and almsgiving to renew our spiritual lives. For penance each one of us must be somewhat creative. Giving up something was something that most of us did as young people. Even as adults giving up something is a helpful practice. But also as adults penance can take a different form such as reaching out in love to others in our lives that takes our time and energy. Penance can also mean forgiving and overcoming old hurts and wounds that still might plague us.

Prayer must be an important ingredient of our Lenten program. To stop for a few minutes each day to read some part of the passion of Jesus from the New Testament; to attend mass as often as possible; to say a rosary each day; to participate in the Stations of the Cross; to spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament are prayers that might assist us prepare for Holy Week by renewing our love for and faith in Jesus our Savior.

Almsgiving is another part of the Church's Lenten program. We are stewards of all the material possessions we have. As good stewards we are expected to help others with our time, talent and treasure. Lent is a time to review how we help others who are in need. A generous spirit is the goal of this Lenten practice.

Finally Lent is a time when the Church encourages all of us to be reconciled with God by having our sins forgiven through the Sacrament of Confession. Admitting our sins and failings is not easy but it is necessary in order to renew a loving relationship with Jesus. Jesus came to save us from our sins. Sin means that something is deeply wounded in us, and that we have weakened or ruptured our relationship with God. The Sacrament of Penance is where God's desire to heal our relationship meets our desire to be healed.

Lent is a time of renewal and recommitment. I pray that all of us draw closer to the Lord during these forty days so that the celebrations of Holy Week will bring us great hope and joy.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am

Your Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Most Reverend Daniel F. Walsh  
Bishop of Santa Rosa