

Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

It's time for change

Lent is a season in which to repent and change and grow.

Let's be honest. None of us is perfect. We all have areas in our lives that need to change. We may be too focused on ourselves, personal pleasure, or the drive to accumulate material things. We often ignore the needs of the poor, fail to reach out in love and service, or shun those who are different from ourselves. Or, we may simply be so caught up in the daily swirl of activities that we do not take time for God or consider how we might act or grow as a follower of Jesus.

Growing as a disciple is all about change. It's about looking at where we are in relationship to God and discerning what steps to take to get closer to Jesus' way of love. Being a disciple is about conversion – becoming more like Christ, day-by-day, decision-by-decision.

This month, we begin the season of Lent, our annual time of spiritual spring cleaning. Lent is a season in which we renew our commitment to living and growing as Christians. Lent is also a time in which we admit that we sin – the word "sin" actually means to "miss the mark" where God and God's ways are concerned. During Lent, we more intentionally turn away from sin, those times we miss the mark, and turn toward God. The Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and giving help us to re-focus our priorities, to change our hearts and minds in order to live and grow in faith.

We do not do this alone. We are assured of God's constant love and the Holy Spirit's presence. We draw on the grace of the sacrament of Reconciliation, embracing Christ's mercy and forgiveness. We are formed and nourished in the Eucharist. We find strength in the company of other Christians within the faith community. Let us make this Lenten season the time for change, for the better.

Constantly, Christians must beg God for the grace of conversion: the grace to know who they are, to whom they belong, how they are to live—the grace to repent and change and grow, the grace to become good disciples and stewards.

God's love is always there. The Spirit of wisdom and courage helps people seek pardon and be mindful, in the face of all their forgetting, that the most important work of their lives is to be Jesus' disciples.

Thus, the stewardship of disciples is not reducible only to one task or another. It involves embracing, cultivating, enjoying, sharing—and sometimes also giving up—the goods of human life.
(SDR, p.28)

IMPACT THIS MONTH

Take time this month to reflect on the ways you are and are not living as a faithful follower of Jesus. Resolve to turn away from sin and toward God. Embrace the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and giving as you repent, change, and grow as a disciple and steward.

BRING FAITH TO LIFE

Sometimes it is difficult to think about God's will. Our fierce human independence balks at the idea of someone else's will being important, even if it is *God* whose will we are considering. Yet each of us has moments in which we sense what we are called to do: dreams of making a contribution in the life of another; a simple act of kindness that could make a real difference; a sense of

purpose or fruitfulness in which we may find meaning in life; a desire to show compassion, share mercy, forgive another, or give of ourselves in a new and substantial way. St. John XXIII understood these interior promptings that are glimmers of the will of God: "Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do."



MORE OR LESS

We might think of Lent as a season of less and more. Less focus on stuff; more on giving of time or attention. Less time absorbed in self; more in prayer and serving the needs of others. Less of unnecessary things; more on the most important ones, which usually aren't things at all.

We often think of Lent as a time to "give up" something, which leads us to less of a favored food or activity, and which ideally gives us

more of an experience of sacrifice, and more time or money for another.

Will your Lenten practice this year lead you to be less distracted, more prayerful, less stressed, and more trusting in God's goodness?

May this Lent be a season of "less is more": as you free yourself from whatever keeps you from following



Jesus, may you find more of all that you truly need: grace, forgiveness, mercy, compassion. And may you share these gifts with others. As you do so, you will surely also discover the grace of the Spirit of God within you, empowering you to act as a person of Christ in the world.

This Lent, let us make "less is more" our motto as we repent and change and grow in faith.