



My Friends in Christ,

As a Christian community, you, and I, once again embark on our annual Lenten journey. As we begin this journey by marking ourselves with ashes, we may ask ourselves this all-important question: "What can I do to keep the spirit and practice of Lent?" May I take this time to offer some practical suggestions.

It is always important for us to "tune up" our faith, taking some time to renew ourselves through prayer, meditation, and education. By deepening our knowledge and understanding of faith, we are often better attuned to its richness and meaning for our life.

Each year, the Season of Lent should provide us with a time of intense retreat, a forty-day period of reflection and penance that prepares us to celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. Our communication with God and our awareness of him is the purpose of prayer. Setting aside extra time each day helps intensify the season. Prayer includes daily Mass, even virtually, Stations of the Cross which can be viewed virtually throughout the Lenten Season on our Parish Website ([www.sscmparish.com](http://www.sscmparish.com).) private confession and joining in our Deanery ROAD TO RESURRECTION RETREAT with Father Richard Burke, C.P. beginning on Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup> and concluding Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. All sessions will be held at Saint Joseph Church and will begin at 6:30 P.M. You may attend the service in person or view it virtually on our Parish website. It will be available on our Parish website throughout the entire Season of Lent. Making restitution for sin as well as disciplining our hearts and minds to focus on God is the purpose of penance. It helps us restore a sense of balance to our souls, thrown off kilter by sin. Penance includes personal sacrifice, self-denial, fasting, almsgiving, and charitable works.

Finally, spiritual practices help us sharpen our understanding and insight into the meaning and understanding of our faith. When you take your faith seriously, you do what is necessary to follow Jesus more closely, to integrate your life and your faith more carefully.

May you be blessed with a truly spiritual and profitable Lenten Season.

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Michael J. Piccola, V.F.

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