

Greetings of peace, my 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. And for these six weeks, Holy Mother Church will share it with us!

During Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to doing three things: to seek the Lord in prayer and Scripture reading, to serve by giving alms, and to sacrifice self-control through fasting (USCCB). I humbly invite us to faithfully and mindfully observe all three.

This year's theme from our United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is Reflect. Repent. Restore.

In your journey to being conformed to Christ, please find attached some goodies to assist you during these six weeks. Again, I include my Lenten Season of Peace for you and your fraternity members to *mindfully fast and feast*. I also include Lenten calendars from the USCCB (in English and in Spanish), and the Interfaith Power and Light. There is also a Lenten Reflection Guide from the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns (in English and Spanish). I invite you to check out more Lenten resources from the USCCB and the ever-faithful Catholic Rice Bowl from Catholic Relief Services. Please visit those sites to find more Lenten activities for you and your fraternities.

*"... 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."*

Our Holy Father exhorts: *"Almsgiving, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. And thus, to rediscover the joy of God's plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness."*

One such courageous initiative where we can give alms is our annual Lenten H2O Project, an international project to promote Christian solidarity, advocacy and financial support for poor communities who have no access to clean drinking water.

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

generous donations help bring clean water to migrants and indigenous communities who were critically affected by the pandemic. On behalf of those communities, we thank you most kindly.

Please send all contributions to:

H2O Lenten Project 2021

c/o Claudia Kauzlarich,

2007 Maverick Trail Harrisonville, MO 64701-1545.

Make the check payable to OFS-USA; with H2O Project in the memo line.

And thank you for your generous contributions.

Also, for your Lenten pleasure, I extend two invitations:

First, to our virtual Lenten Meditations, to “live Lent well.” These Lenten Meditations will be held Thursdays, February 25 – March 25, from 6:30pm to 8pm Eastern. To register, please click on the link below.

Register for Lenten Meditations:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85706073023>

And, if you have not registered for the second Prayers for Lamentation and Hope, there is still time. We will meet for this virtual event on Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, at 8pm Eastern. The first Prayers for Lamentation and Hope held in January was such a lovely witness of faith from over 100 Franciscans from around the country, including Guam. To register, please click on the link below.

Register for the Prayers for Lamentation and Hope:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpdOiorz8tE9A-dNvUT0v\\_zKdk-Bw\\_DOTe](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpdOiorz8tE9A-dNvUT0v_zKdk-Bw_DOTe)

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

Wishing you blessings of peace and all good!

*Carolyn D. Townes, OFS*

National Animator,

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

[U.S. Secular Franciscan Order](#)

*"Live a Life Worthy of Your Call."*

*(OFS-USA 2021 Theme)*