

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 wondrous 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!

As with most years, we enter into this holy season during a time of violence and unrest with more mass shootings. Let us lift up to the Lord all victims of violence and all those who mourn the loss of life and liberty due to violence. Let our prayers rise up like incense as they fall afresh on those of us who are prepared to mobilize and take action on gun violence and violence of any type.

*Loving and gracious God, help us to **reflect** on what is ours to do, **repent** of what we have failed to do, and **restore** our broken relationships this Lenten season. We ask you to grant us **listening** hearts and wise **discernment** as we **go forth** to bring about peace and justice in this world you have bestowed upon us. In Jesus' name, we humbly and joyfully pray. Amen.*

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 exercise self-control through **fasting**. I humbly invite us to faithfully and mindfully observe all three, to the best of our ability.

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 and resources from the **USCCB** (also available in Spanish), **Creation Justice Ministries**, and the **DC Interfaith Power and Light**, who have created a Creation Care calendar. I invite you to check out more Lenten resources from the **USCCB** and the ever-faithful **Catholic Rice Bowl** from **Catholic Relief Services**.

*“... 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, I invite you 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 helped bring clean water to communities here in the US and abroad. On behalf of those communities, we thank you most kindly.

Please send all contributions to the **H2O Lenten Project 2022**, 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.

I wish you all a very blessed and holy 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](#)

"Listen, Discern, and Go Forth (Joyfully!)"
(OFS-USA 2022 - 2025 Theme)