

Dear Friends,

Today we start the season of lent. As we are in the winter, especially with the freezing weather conditions, we need warmth, we need a humidifier to put moisture in the air. These are all some preparations we do to stay healthy. These are all some external preparations that adjust us into the situation of life. During this pandemic, we all have to wear a mask, though there are different thoughts and findings on it. Likewise, lent is a season of preparation to ourselves to reconcile with God, ourselves and with our neighbors.

As we sprinkle the ashes on our head, it invites us to repent or look back into our life. During lent, the church accompanies and encourages us to accept to Lord's invitation to return to Him with our whole heart accepting God's grace for the day of salvation.

The readings today invites us to go back to God. In the first reading, the prophet Joel insists that we should experience a complete conversion of heart and not simply regret for our sins. This return to the Lord message is not an outward gesture of fasting, weeping and mourning but also interior movement of the heart. The Responsorial Psalm (Ps 51) for today, provides us with an excellent prayer of repentance and plea for forgiveness. Saint Paul in the second reading, advises us "to become reconciled to God." Today's Gospel instructs us to assimilate the true spirit of fasting and prayer, not just settle for just the legal externals.

I would like to reflect on two things based on the readings. As St. Paul in the second readings invites to reconcile with God. Let us use this opportunity to reflect how much we have wounded God by neglecting him in our life by using god's words in vain. There are a lot of times we fail to acknowledge his grace and blessings in our life. Especially during this pandemic, how much we missed him in our life. This is the season both personally and community wise to reconcile with God for all that we have done.

Let us also ask him to heal our wounds caused by various reasons in this past year.