



## The New Moment

OFFICE of the BISHOP

February 18, 2019

### 2019 Lenten Journey March 6 – April 18, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Pope Francis in his 2019 Lenten Message highlights the classic practices of fasting, prayer and almsgiving that characterize our annual Lenten journey.

*“Fasting, that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to “devour” everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts. Prayer, which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and his mercy. 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. “*

In a commentary on the Pope’s letter, Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, notes the following:

*“we are sending the text of the Holy Father’s Message for Lent 2019, with the theme: “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of children of God” (Rom 8:19). The Pope reminds us that if men live as children of God, by obeying His law, they also benefit creation by cooperating in its redemption. Unfortunately, the harmony generated by redemption is threatened by the negative power of sin: in fact, unless we tend constantly towards Easter, towards the horizon of the Resurrection, the mentality expressed in the slogans “I want it all and I want it now!” and “Too much is never enough”, gains the upper hand. Lent calls Christians to embody the paschal mystery, in particular through fasting, prayer and almsgiving. In this way, we will 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, to find our true happiness in this love.”

As we undertake the season of Lent in the Diocese of Des Moines which calls all of us to a deeper engagement with God and one another, let us do so inspired by the diocesan vision of “The New Moment” which consists of the following components:

- 1) The renewed centrality of Jesus in the life of faith;
- 2) Committing ourselves to discipleship of Jesus inspiring us to **GO** be missionaries of Jesus in our lived experience;
- 3) In activity exercise the universal call to evangelizing – making Jesus Christ known and loved in our times, being especially attentive to reaching out to the millennials.

The following resources are offered in support of the Lenten Journey:

- 1) The text in English and Spanish of Pope Francis’ 2019 Lenten Message. While somewhat lengthy, a prayerful reading can be very insightful.
- 2) Two Lenten opportunities for **Almsgiving**:
  - a. Rice Bowl 2019. This annual opportunity sponsored by Catholic Relief Services benefits the hungry and poor throughout the world. The CRS Rice Bowl effect unites prayer, fasting and almsgiving to lift families and communities out of poverty and put them on a path toward resilience, prosperity and stability. The sacrificial gifts of your parish family members help in three areas:
    - clean drinking water support for vulnerable communities
    - seeds and training support to help farmers improve harvests
    - health exams and treatment support for children

For more information including free Lenten resources for your parish programs, use this CRS link: <https://www.crsricebowl.org/>

- b. Building the Kingdom. This is an undertaking of the Diocese of Des Moines in support of the Holy Ghost Fathers Juniorate Seminary in Ihalia Nigeria. This initiative is designed for our Religious Formation and Catholic School youth in assisting their peers in Nigeria by rebuilding this institution which had fallen into serious disrepair. Thus far the efforts of our youth have raised \$146,000 in support of this worthwhile undertaking.

The leadership at Holy Ghost Juniorate is extremely grateful and continually keep in contact by sending photographs and information about the repairs and construction they have accomplished with the donated funds.

Bishop Pates saw the facilities prior to any renovation and he could not believe anyone could live in and/or learn in facilities that were in such poor condition. While much has been done, the needs are great.

As Pope Frances continues to remind us, "...our lives must bear witness to His love for all our brothers and sisters." We ask for your continued prayers and financial support for the *Building the Kingdom* project during this Lent 2019.

For more information contact John Gaffney at [jgaffney@dmdiocese.org](mailto:jgaffney@dmdiocese.org) or Dr. Tracy Bonday at [tbonday@dmdiocese.org](mailto:tbonday@dmdiocese.org).

- 3) A significant opportunity for **prayer** and **conversion**. The centerpiece of this activity is "The Wounded Body of Christ", a four part booklet for small faith sharing groups developed by Deacon Matt Halbach of the Diocese of Des Moines.

This resource is intended to unite clergy and laity together to take a proactive step utilizing a small group process in your parish community toward healing in the face of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. I have spent a great deal of this fall listening to the heartbreak, sadness and anger by the faithful in our diocese. This pain and suffering needs to be addressed. The pastoral guidance articulated by Deacon Halbach can be the best gift of healing you can provide your parishioners.

The process is ideally situated during Lent for established parish small groups or new groups. The four sessions are intended to be held weekly but could be scheduled more frequently depending upon the needs of the group members. If your parish is unfamiliar with establishing small groups, please contact John Gaffney at [jgaffney@dmdiocese.org](mailto:jgaffney@dmdiocese.org) for help.

The session books are \$2.95 each with volume discounts. To view a copy and/or purchase this resource through Twenty-Third Publications, use this link: <http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/woboofchnepa.html>.

Finally, I also attach the "2019 Lenten Fasting and Abstinence Guidelines for the Diocese of Des Moines."

It is my heartfelt prayer that the upcoming 2019 Lenten Journey may be especially impactful as we, the Body of Christ, seek urgently needed renewal.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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The Most Reverend Richard E. Pates  
Bishop of Des Moines