

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



Lent is the season of remembering the grace of our baptism through focus on our process of conversion. In the waters of baptism we are born anew through the love of the Most Holy Trinity. Living the baptized life is taking onto ourselves the life of Christ. By living the Paschal Mystery, the life-suffering-death-resurrection of Jesus, we enter ever more deeply into the mystery of God's life. But, because of our human nature, we stray at times, committing sin, making bad choices and simply attempting to go through life on our terms. Conversion, growing ever deeper into the image of Christ, is a necessary and on-going process for our lives. St. Paul reminds us that "all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (Rom 3:23), but our hope is that "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)." Yes, we are sinners, but in spite of our sins, Christ still died, giving His life that we may live. The process of conversion is about remembering that the love of God is larger, deeper and wider than anything we can ever imagine. Sin does not erase our baptismal glory, but dirties it. Our process of conversion helps us to clean away the dirt that the reflection of Christ, and His love, may shine more brightly in our lives. Our process of conversion is aided by the celebration of the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Reconciliation;

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Vocation Newsletter

prayer, almsgiving and fasting; and works of charity. Conversion is necessary if we want to reach our full stature in Christ. While not an easy process, it is rewarding. The reward of conversion is a deeper faith in the loving and merciful presence of the Lord who chooses to incarnate himself in our lives. Lent is the season of conversion assisting us to better understand our

baptismal call to follow Christ and embracing the process of conversion as the means to this understanding.

In the consecrated life, Lent, and the process of penance-conversion, is celebrated by recognizing the permanent value of embracing the Gospel call of transformation from the "old self" to





becoming a “new creation”. Like many individuals and families, communities of consecrated men and women undertake the penances of Lent wanting to become better reflections of Christ. In addition to the special practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, religious communities may decide to have special days of fasting and prayer, undertake certain acts of charity or have extra prayer moments as some ways to embrace Lent’s call to conversion. The Servite Friar keeps Lent

makes our common identity stronger, our common witness to Christ more vibrant and our life together a rich experience of God’s charity in Christ. Ultimately, the traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are a call for each of us to embrace a deeper life of charity where God and others become our focus more than ourselves. Each Servite community and friar will celebrate Lenten prayer, fasting and almsgiving in ways that continue to place God in the center of

Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. **The consecrated life is an adventure of embracing and sharing the charity of God. How might I share in this adventure? Why?**
2. **Are my Lenten practices making me more charitable? How?**
3. **Why am I attracted to the consecrated life? What are my hesitations in joining consecrated life?**

as an intense moment of drawing closer to Christ. Individually and in common, we undertake Lenten practices with an emphasis on intense charity to all. The Servite Constitutions instruct the friar that “in monastic tradition penance-conversion consists in the radical and constant orientation of the community and individuals toward the newness of Christ and in the choice of means to achieve this. For us Servants, following the example of our First Fathers and the tradition of the Order, penance consists above all in charity understood as service to one another and in the experience of community life lived with sincere and generous commitment” (art. 71). Living well in common is a key element of the consecrated life. To live community authentically well takes patience with each other, being educated in living and communication skills, and in honoring the dignity of each friar. As with families or any groups of persons, learning to be together takes work. Because Servites highly esteem the gift of the common life, learning to live well with each other is always our highest priority. We are individually our best selves when we live well with each other. Being charitable with each other

our lives and service to each other and all people as the object of our commitment to live in charity the love that God graces our lives. Building community where we live and minister is the work of Servites. When these communities are profoundly charitable in nature and experience they better reflect the Kingdom of God and we have accomplished the task given us as a religious community. We invite you to join us in this awesome and holy adventure.

As you move through Lent, reflect on how your Lenten practices are leading you to greater charity toward others. The charity of God is experienced through the Lord Jesus who gave his life that we could live. Our baptism makes us participants in this wonderful relationship. Through the process of conversion may we all come to know deeply the charity of God and be moved to share this with others. As you continue your discernment, know that we Servites are praying for you. Blessings on your Lent.

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