



BISHOP'S MONTHLY REFLECTION

February 2024

“Proclaim the message, insist on it in season and out of season, refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience, but do all with patience and sound doctrine.”
(2 Tm 4:2)

Ash Wednesday opens the door for us to cross the threshold into the Lenten Season. The 40 days can be seen as the season of: **the wake-up call!** It is a time for us to reflect on how our sins have contributed to the spiritual darkness, not only in our own lives but that of society. If we realize it or not, our sins have a communal impact on this world and its affairs.

Sin finds its roots in **rebellion**: rebellion against God's sovereignty. It is about our autonomy vs God's will for us. As a disciple of Jesus, if I proclaim that Jesus is truly Lord of my life, then I cannot be so turned inwardly that I only see things as being: **my** choice, **my** body, **my** preference, **my** life, **my** business, over **my** will. No! It is **God's** will, **his** preference. **He** is the Author and Lord of life, and his concern for our salvation is **his** business.

To repeat: that which rebels against God is fueled by our egos and expressed in our “No” to God, turning our backs to his Kingdom and forfeiting the gift of salvation! Therefore, the result is most grievous because one chooses eternal death over eternal life. That is why, during the season of Lent, we are to pray for our brothers and sisters who are unrepentant. We are reminded it was at Fatima that Our Lady, as a Mother concerned for her children, gave us a prayer in which we ask her Son, Jesus, for mercy on behalf of poor sinners:

“O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell.
Lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.”

The call of Lent challenges us to: “Turn away from sin and accept the Gospel.” It is an invitation for humanity to stop rebelling against a God who loves us and to live a life centered in the teaching of Jesus. The teaching, the message, is to be proclaimed in and out of season. We are to refute falsehood and correct error, and we are to respond to the call to be obedient to God, to be patient, and to accept sound doctrine. All these things are good things to take to heart during the season of Lent. Above all this, we are reminded to heed the call from Heaven: **Penance! Penance! Penance!**

This year, let us make a special effort to commit ourselves to the Lenten disciplines of *prayer, fasting, and almsgiving*. May these disciplines help us to accept God's gifts of grace and mercy which will result in a transformation - an experience of *conversion* - metanoia - a new life in **Christ!**

Let us respond to **the wake-up call** of Lent - a call to ongoing conversion, a call to grow in holiness!

Wishing all a grace-filled Lenten Season!

Bishop Cotta