



Diocese of Fall River
Office of the Bishop
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.

Bishop da Cunha's 2019 Lenten Message


Another holy season of Lent is upon us. At this time of the year we look forward to a change of season and await the warmth of spring after a long and cold winter. Lent is a time for deeper reflection on the mystery of our Salvation as we prepare to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

I am sure many of us feel that Lent is not what it used to be; that some among our Catholic population have lost the true meaning of Lent. We remember with some nostalgia when we were growing up, how Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent were special days of penance, prayer and sacrifice. The Church has not changed its teaching, nor has she lost the spirit of Lent, but our secularized world has influenced and affected our view of Lent.

The Church still reminds us, and the readings from the Liturgy during Lent confirm, that the Lord calls us and invites us during this time to a life of change and conversion. The Scripture readings speak of beginning anew; of fasting, prayer and almsgiving; of conversion of heart; of forgiveness. They speak of the hardness of the human heart, they challenge us to love our enemies, and remind us that we are all called to live a holy life.

This Sacred season of Lent is a great opportunity for families to spend more time together, to pray together and to teach their children the meaning of Lent, and to teach the importance of cultivating a spirit of sacrifice. I have heard parents say that they don't want their children to go through what they went through. They want to give their children what they themselves could not have, in many instances because their parents could not afford. However, just because they now can afford to give material things to their children, things that they could not have, does not mean they are doing what is best for them. Parents do a great service to their children when they teach them discipline, show them the value of sacrifice, require them to do their share of work around the house, are able to say no when necessary, know how to put limits on the use of technology, teach them to care for others, and to share their resources with the poor and needy. Children who grow knowing the value of sacrifice, discipline and hard work, will grow to be better citizens and better Christians.

My prayer and my wish for all of us this Lent is to embrace the spirit of prayer, penance and sacrifice, to recognize our need for continuous conversion, and to pass onto the next generation these same values we received from our parents and grandparents. By doing this, we will be teaching future generations how to live and share the same values we treasure. I pray that we all may contribute to build a better world, to live in peace with each other, respecting and loving one another as brothers and sisters.


Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V.
Bishop of Fall River