



Our Lady of Pompeii Church

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Easter, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

On Ash Wednesday, the small mark of ash which we received on our foreheads was a visible invitation to consider that of the many things that occupy most of our thoughts, energy, and time, (things that we chase after and worry about every day), nothing will remain. No matter how hard we work, at the end of our life we will take no wealth, titles, or honors with us.

If that is the case, what should occupy our thoughts? The Gospel proposed three answers: almsgiving, prayer, fasting. Why? Prayer unites us to God; charity, to our neighbor; fasting, to ourselves.

This Lent, and actually every Lent, invites us to seek God first, in prayer. This lifts us from the horizontal and ordinary to rediscover that we are all children of God. It invites us to focus on others, with the charity that frees us from the vanity of acquiring and of thinking that things are only good if they are good for me.

Finally, Lent invites us to look inside our heart, with fasting, which frees us from the desire for and attachment to things that will in time weigh us down. Prayer, charity, fasting: three investments in a treasure that endures.

*Jesus said: **“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”** (Mt 6:21). If our heart only attaches itself to earthly things, sooner or later it will become a slave to them: things meant to be used become things we serve. But, if our heart is attached to what does not pass away and is centered on God, we rediscover our true selves and are set free.*

It is fitting at this time to reflect on the ways that prayer, fasting and charity have allowed God to work through our lives during Lent. Some of the ways may have been remarkable, some ways may seemed to have been unthinkable, and some hardly noticed at all.

Yet, when we recognize God’s Presence within us, we can witness to Him and acknowledge that He has been close to us in bright and dark moments.



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He has helped us understand that attaching ourselves to Him is the only thing that really matters. In our compassion to others, we have learned that God is especially present in the brothers and sisters that He has placed beside us.

Lent is a time of grace that liberates the heart and grants us a new way of encountering the people and events of our lives. So let us celebrate Easter for what it is: the Resurrection of Jesus and the new life which is now ours because of it!

May the joy of the Risen Lord be celebrated in our community as a source of peace and serenity in these still difficult times.

On behalf of the Scalabrini Fathers, I would like to wish all of you a Holy Easter.

Sincerely,

Fr. Angelo