



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Message for Lent 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the holy season of Lent, I make a simple yet challenging request: spend time with the Word of God. In our considerations of what we shall "give up" during these forty days, let us also determine to "take up" the Bible and thus seek to be taught, nourished and challenged by God's sacred teachings. He offers us his Word as a gift of love. Together with the grace He pours out in the sacraments, His Word shapes, guides and transforms our lives along our pilgrim journey toward the eternal life God wills for each of us.

May we never tire of approaching the Word of God; it is an inexhaustible font of wisdom and hope. Perhaps some time to read and pray with the Bible could be created by the sacrifice of a favourite television program or other pastime. To anyone unaccustomed to reading Sacred Scripture, a simple way to begin would be to concentrate on the Gospel passage assigned for the mass of the day. Ponder even one line that catches your attention, and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your understanding of God's will for you that day. How might God's Word be calling me to love more deeply, or to make a small sacrifice of myself for the sake of another person? I also ask that you consider ways to study the Bible with others, maybe through a Bible study with family members or fellow parishioners. Perhaps you could begin, individually or as a family, to pray with Scripture through the weekly mealtime prayers offered by the Archdiocese.

Lent is a wonderful occasion of grace, a blessed time in which each of us is summoned to a careful examination of conscience in the light of God's Word. As we open with reverence the sacred page and ponder in humility its teachings, may we be led by God's love and mercy to the change of heart he seeks from us.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton
1 March 2017