

# ~ The Epistle ~

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST  
ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CANADA • TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION  
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THE MOST REVEREND SHANE B. JANZEN, ARCHBISHOP & RECTOR



*"I therefore invite you, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditation upon God's holy Word."*

(BCP, p. 612)

With the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday, we have entered into the holy Season of Lent. Lent is the ideal time to focus our mind, soul, and body on the things of God. It is a Season in which we are called back to the things which matter most; it is a time of reckoning, repentance, and renewal. I urge you to participate in the prayers, worship, and devotions offered to us by the Church during the next forty days. Only by entering into the fullness of Christ's Passion and Death may we hope to enter into the fullness of His Resurrection.

Lent provides each of us an opportunity to reflect on our lives and on God's place in it. We are exhorted to examine our thoughts, words, and deeds in light of His commandments; and to undergo a *metanoia* -- a change of heart -- that our old lives may be transformed into the likeness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Lent also draws us back to a simpler life -- a life focused on God and His saving actions in our lives; principally the salvation wrought for us by the Passion and Death of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Through fasting and self-denial we are provided opportunities to spend time with God in prayer and meditation. By forsaking some temporal nourishment and entertainment we are able to partake of eternal nourishment -- fortifying our spiritual lives by reading and meditating on God's holy Word, and feeding on the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. We are reminded in Scripture, "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Lent is also a time for quiet. It is difficult to find a time and a place in which to enjoy some solitude and quiet these days. Yet this is essential to the spiritual life. I would encourage you to make time and space in this Lent for quiet prayer and meditation. Like regular exercise and a healthy diet, regular time spent in prayer and meditation on God's holy Word will nourish and strengthen your spiritual life, and enable you to live a more peaceful, secure, and happy existence.

At Saint John's we are offered a number of ways to enhance our spiritual lives during Lent and to progress along our journey to God: Mass on Thursdays and Holy Days; Bible study at our Thursday morning Study Group; and on Fridays, the Stations of the Cross at 5:30 pm. Most importantly, the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) is available throughout Lent; and I encourage you to avail yourself of this Sacrament. We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God; we need to seek His forgiveness and receive His pardon.

Our Lenten Quiet Day will take place on Saturday, March 17. We will conclude the month of March (and the Season of Lent) with Palm Sunday on March 25<sup>th</sup>, followed by Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday...culminating with the joyous celebration of Easter on April 1<sup>st</sup>. With all these Services and commemorations before us, it is all the more important for us to prepare ourselves spiritually in this holy Season.

Finally, do not forget to practice acts of charity and self-discipline in memory of our Lord's great act of love and self-denial on the Cross. 'Give up' something in order to 'give of' yourself to God and others. Your Father in heaven sees what you do 'in secret' and will reward you, both in this life and in the life to come.

So, as I did from the altar on Ash Wednesday, I invite you, "in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditation upon God's holy Word." (BCP, p.612)

*Archbishop Shane B. Janzen*

## HOLY SEASON OF LENT

The holy Season of Lent is now upon us. We have received the outward and visible sign of our inward and spiritual contrition in the ashes placed upon our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. We began our Lenten observance with a day of fasting and abstinence; coupled with the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and the call to prayer and repentance. Now we begin our ascent to Mount Calvary; and in these 40 days of Lent, we shall strip ourselves of the weight of our sins and the baggage of worldly things, placing them, and ourselves, at the foot of the Cross on Good Friday.

But Lent is not just a season of discipline, denial, and repentance; it is also a season of renewal, hope, and triumph. It is a time to give of ourselves while giving up something of ourselves. It is indeed a period in which we reflect upon our past but also one which prepares us for the future, drawing us ever closer to the God who is love.

Our Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent sets the tone for the whole of our Lenten observance, and is a dramatic illustration of our walk as Christians through a life of promise and hope but also of struggle and temptation; of faith in God; and of obedience to His will and His Commandments.

The temptations of Christ recorded in Saint Matthew's Gospel were of a subtle character; as are most temptations which come our way. They were temptations to show that Jesus had the power to do God's work, and the faith to act on God's word. What could be wrong with that? Taken together, they cover the range of the power and work that might be expected of the One whom God had chosen to carry out His saving plan. But let us examine the real motivation and the real meaning behind the devil's words of testing and temptation.

First was the temptation to believe that life is lived primarily on the basis of material well-being. "Command this stone to become a loaf of bread". The echo of Israel's temptation in the wilderness as they journeyed from slavery to freedom in the Promised Land. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3). The purpose of the long wilderness journey recorded in the Old Testament was to see whether keeping God's commands counted more to the people than material comfort. The reply of Moses to Israel, repeated by Jesus to the devil, is "one does not live by bread alone." Jesus does not say "not by bread at all." There is indeed a material dimension to life, and it is God who made it when He created the world and pronounced it good. But as our Lord would tell His disciples, "life is more than food, and the body more than clothing." (St. Matthew 6:25)

There have been those who throughout history have sold their souls for a bowl of soup and for material well-being. However, there have also been those who have given up freedom for the sake of conscience; material comforts for the sake of others; and their time, talent and treasure for the sake of the Kingdom of God. There are those too who have fought and died in the battle for liberty and for the dignity and sanctity of each and every soul. The roll-call of Christian martyrs from St. Stephen in *Acts* chapter 7 to the latest victims of oppression, terrorism and hatred in our century stand as imperishable testimony to those who regarded love of God as taking precedence over love of self.

Life lived "for bread alone" is a feeble substitute for life lived for God and in obedience to the truth of His Holy Word. Jesus knew the temptation, but He did not give way.

The second temptation presented to Jesus by the devil was to believe that working eye-catching miracles was a superior way of winning followers to God; rather than simple, humble obedience to God in faith.

The insidiousness of this temptation was that it was a challenge to believe and to act upon God's promise of protection and provision. Why not jump off the pinnacle of the Temple, landing unharmed on the ground to the applause of amazed spectators? After all hadn't God promised that He would give His angels charge over His Son, lest at any time He dash His foot against a stone, and so be harmed?

Jesus' reply to the devil is again drawn from Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The miraculous power of God is real, but it is not some electronic gadget to be switched on to impress and entertain onlookers seeking a cure for their boredom. The power and mercy of God are to be sought in a spirit of humble faith and obedience. His providence and protection are always there for His faithful people but only for our well-being as His precious sons and daughters; and not for show.

It is significant that this second temptation, the 'Temple temptation', takes place in Jerusalem; the place where ultimately the ministry and witness of Jesus' providential love will end in utter rejection by the Temple authorities. However, for Jesus resistance to the second temptation is in truth submission to the way of the Cross.

That is how the world would be won back to God; and not by conjuring tricks or meaningless spectacle. And even in this temptation we can behold the truth which the devil's lie tries to hide. For behind the pinnacle of the Temple we can see in the distance the silhouette of the Cross lifted high upon Mount Calvary.

The third temptation faced by Jesus was to believe that power and prestige are the key to life and salvation.

For many people, much of life is a power-struggle, sometimes driven by the desire to win, often simply by the attempt to survive. But the battle Jesus was fighting was no mere turf war. It was the battle for His Kingdom – the Kingdom of truth, salvation, love and justice. The devil had seemingly much to offer, for we read: “And again the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt but fall down and worship me.”

Were the devil’s words true? Are the kingdoms of the world in the grip of the devil, for him to give to whomever he pleases? It is a half-truth. Wherever life is lived on the devil’s terms it is true; there he is king. And he can offer glittering, and seemingly low-cost bargains, as his offer to Jesus shows: “If you then will worship me, the world and all its glory will be yours – think of the souls you could save.” No agony in Gethsemane, no rejection, no Calvary, no Cross. The bill, however, would come later, as it did for Israel in the Promised Land. Her endless compromises with false gods and debased values eventually led to her ruin. Jesus picked up the words spoken to Israel, recorded in Deuteronomy 6, and hurled them back at the Tempter: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, And Him only shalt thou serve.” To make a compact with the devil, to live life on his terms and to adopt his values is to sentence oneself to destruction and ultimately, damnation; which in the end will encompass not only the souls of the damned but the devil himself and all who have made common cause with him. Jesus knew that there could be no Crown without the Cross, no salvation without His sacrifice, no life without His meritorious death, once for all.

Taken together, the three temptations add up to one thing: allurement to do God’s will in appearance, while rejecting it in reality. It is the cheap substitute for obedience, and it is a fraud. Jesus recognized that His whole word and ministry depended on total and unconditional acceptance of His Father’s will. The devil’s way was much more attractive: a square meal for an empty stomach, a position of (almost) supreme power, and throngs of followers attracted by mind-boggling conjuring tricks. It was the painless way to power and position. It was also the way to damnation – for Himself and for the world He had come to redeem.

The snares of the devil are always being set, for that is the way of evil; but it is not the way of God. St. James bids us: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will

flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.” (James 4: 4,5)

Our Lord withstood the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil to restore the obedience of fallen man to the commandments of God. In turn, Jesus offers to each of us the grace to withstand these same temptations in our time; and offers in the place of sin and death, God’s blessing and eternal life.

#### ✠ THE DAYS OF LENT ✠

IN accordance with the ancient practice of the Church, and as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer (p. xiii), the Forty Days of Lent are days of abstinence from flesh and fowl; and Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are also days of fasting.

Christian Fasting consists of a reduction of food so that the permanent state of a certain hunger may be lived as a reminder of God and a constant effort to keep our mind on Him. The exact amount of food we cut down on depends on our individual capacities, occupations, age and state of health. It is best and safest to begin at a minimum, and increase our effort little by little.

In a letter to the clergy, our first Bishop, Carmino deCatanzaro, provided us with sensible guidelines in the matter of fasting. He pointed out that some people should not fast at all, such as pregnant women, nursing mothers, those in poor health, the elderly, children, and those engaged in heavy manual labour. In other words, it is for those adults in normal health. He also stated that the list of days of abstinence and fasting in the Prayer Book (p.xiii) are as simple as can be, yet wholly traditional. Any of us ought to be able to remember them. He links fasting and abstinence to penitence. We go without because our Lord denied Himself, even to the point of death on the Cross, for us sinners. Fasting and abstinence are meant to reinforce our "fasting from sin" which is a Christian duty at all times.

Bishop deCatanzaro also pointed out that while fasting refers to a notable reduction in the food we eat, abstinence refers to what we eat or drink. Traditionally the Friday abstinence applies to meat dishes. In Lent this is extended to each of the weekdays (Monday - Saturday). Our abstinence, whatever form it takes, must be a real act of self-denial, and that we do it "for the Lord", not to be seen by men (*see S. Matt. 6:16-18*). It must be real! Lent is also the time to increase our charitable givings and doings; to reach out to others by giving of our time, talent and treasure.

With this understanding, let us now enter into a holy Lent, preparing for a most blessed Easter!



## SPIRITUAL LIFE

His life drawn from the Holy Spirit,  
who raised Jesus from the dead  
and turns the whole world into a new creation.

The Spirit within you will bear fruit  
of simplicity and goodness, modesty and joy,  
sobriety and gentleness.

He will give you interior freedom  
and bring your love to perfection.  
He will make you into a new person.

So don't carry on a futile battle against yourself  
don't divide yourself into good and evil.  
Resist the temptation to analyse yourself –  
turn your attention to the Lord instead,  
and be deeply receptive.  
Accept yourself in His light  
and concentrate on the mission  
you have to accomplish.

God's Spirit will bring you to simplicity  
in an undivided dedication  
to Him and to your fellowmen.  
He gives you no programme  
but the chance of turning yourself towards love  
hour by hour.

And so spiritual life is not a burden  
but a liberating vocation.  
It is much more a matter of simplifying  
than of complicated methods  
and extraordinary performances.

In special cases it can be good  
to impose some specific discipline on yourself.  
Your daily life among your brethren and others  
in service, openness and fidelity  
is the usual form of asceticism,  
which is both effective and enough.

Every day look at the way you are living  
in the light of God's Word.  
Let it warm you when you are cold,  
encourage you when you are disappointed.  
You must not only be a hearer of the Word –  
you must also bring it to fulfillment.  
Blessed are you if you meditate upon it  
daily in your heart:  
you will be like a tree by the running water,  
whose branches will stay fresh and green,  
and they will keep bringing forth new fruit.

Spiritual life will develop  
only in a climate of silence.  
Bring the warring voices within you to  
stillness.

Create an atmosphere of tranquility and silence  
even within your daily living.  
You will surely have realized  
that you cannot become a spiritual person  
without an interior discipline in your  
dealings with the world.  
Don't let yourself be trapped into the unrest  
that comes from excessive talking and noise.

Be discerning in your choice  
of what the television, radio and papers  
offer you.  
Without a personal control  
on your imaginations and emotions  
you will undermine your spiritual strength  
and lessen your changes  
of genuinely meeting and loving others.

You will find a source of wisdom  
and spiritual joy in the feasts of the Church.  
The year is crowned with the signs  
of God's goodness.  
If you celebrate these feasts with the Church  
then your own life and suffering,  
your enthusiasm and work,  
your dying and rising  
and your waiting for the Lord  
will receive significance and impact.

Never be misled by the thought  
That after failing and sinning  
There can be no forgiveness,  
Look critically at your own shortcomings,  
But be sure that with the Lord  
There is always abundance of redemption.

Your way through life  
will not remain the same.  
There are years of happiness  
and years of suffering.  
There are years of abundance,  
and years of poverty,  
years of hope, and of disappointment,  
of building up, and of breaking down.  
But God has a firm hold on you  
through everything.

There are years of strength  
and years of weakness,  
years of certainty, years of doubt.  
It is all part of life,  
and it is worth the effort  
to live it to the end  
and not give up before it is accomplished.

You need never stop growing.  
A new future is always possible.  
Even on the other side of death  
a new existence waits for you  
in the fullness of that glory  
which God has prepared for you  
from the beginning.

*~ Rule for a New Brother.*

## MY LENTEN RULE OF LIFE

*The Season of Lent affords Christians an opportunity to renew their faith and devotional life. You are invited to fill out this Lenten Rule of Life, sign it, and keep it close at hand as a guide for your Lenten observance this year. This Lenten Rule of Life is your free offering of devotion, self-denial, and sacrificial giving that you may continue to grow in grace and Christian discipline, to the glory of God and the deepening of your own life of faith, prayer and service.*

### I UNDERTAKE, AS MY LENTEN RULE, THE FOLLOWING:

1. I will set aside the following time daily for Prayer and Meditation:

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2. I will attend the following Service(s) in addition to my usual Sunday worship:

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3. I will read a chapter or portion of the Bible daily or weekly:

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4. I will read at least one religious or devotional book during Lent, other than the Bible:

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5. I will serve others by undertaking the following volunteer activities:

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6. I will give up the following food(s), activities, or pleasures during Lent:

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7. My Lenten fast will take the following form in the meals I eat during this Season:

*[The Lenten Fast is generally observed by simple, traditionally meatless, meals; the exact nature of the fast is up to you. Medical diets must be observed; nutritional needs should not be ignored. Sundays in Lent are not days of fasting and abstinence.]*

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8. My Lenten Offerings I shall devote to:

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**ALL THIS I UNDERTAKE TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND BY HIS GRACE.**

~ ~ ~ **CATHEDRAL CALENDAR** ~ ~ ~

<i>February 18</i>	<i>FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT Mattins 9:15 am Sung Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>February 21</i>	<i>Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm</i>
<i>February 22</i>	<i>Lenten Feria ~ Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>February 25</i>	<i>SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT Mattins 9:15 am Sung Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>Lenten Feria ~ Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 4</i>	<i>THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT Mattins 9:15 am Sung Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 8</i>	<i>Lenten Feria ~ Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 11</i>	<i>LENT IV: MOTHERING SUNDAY Mattins 9:15 am Sung Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 15</i>	<i>Lenten Feria ~ Mass 10:00 am Study Group 10:45 am</i>
<i>March 17</i>	<i>LENTEN QUIET DAY Mattins 10:00 am Mass 11:30 am Evensong 3:00 pm</i>
<i>March 18</i>	<i>LENT V: PASSION SUNDAY Mattins 9:15 am Sung Mass 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 22</i>	<i>Lenten Feria ~ Mass 10:00 am Study Group 10:45 am</i>
<i>March 24</i>	<i>PALM SUNDAY: Beginning of Holy Week Mattins 9:15 am Blessing &amp; Distribution of Palms and Holy Eucharist 10:00 am</i>
<i>March 29</i>	<i>MAUNDY THURSDAY Mass of the Last Supper 7:00 pm</i>
<i>March 30</i>	<i>GOOD FRIDAY Mattins &amp; Litany 10:00 am Liturgy of the Passion 2:30 pm</i>
<i>March 31</i>	<i>HOLY SATURDAY Mattins &amp; Ante-Communion 10:00 am Preparation of the Church for Easter 10:30 am</i>
<i>March 31</i>	<i>EASTER VIGIL 8:00 pm</i>

*Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 5:30 pm.*