

March 19, 2018

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*With great hope and thanksgiving we are approaching the holiest days of our Church. We pray that each day of our Lenten journey brings us closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These three actions of the Lenten spirit truly allow us to deepen and strengthen our personal relationship with Jesus.*

*By lifting up our hearts and minds to God more intensely in the season of Lent, we are able to reflect on God's great love for us. We praise and thank Him for creating us and giving us everything that we need in life. We repent of our sins and we are reminded of the need to forgive those who have hurt us. Through the Lenten liturgy we come to understand why Jesus had to suffer and die for us. Prayer provides us with an opportunity to deepen our commitment to being a disciple of Jesus and adopted child of God.*

*As we pray more deeply, we experience sorrow for the sins we have committed against God and others and for failing to be more loving and generous to those in need. Lent offers us a timely reminder and opportunity to die to ourselves and to look outside ourselves and come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily needs. This act of genuine love, called almsgiving, is itself a form of prayer because it is obedience to God's will. It is itself a form of fasting because it demands sacrificial giving, not just giving something, but giving up something we would otherwise keep for ourselves. This something isn't just money or material things, but also our precious time, which for many of us is most difficult to part with or share.*

*So as we approach the end of this Lenten journey, may we continue to rise whenever we stumble. May we persevere during times of trial and difficulty. May we never allow despair and anxiety to trouble our hearts. It is never too*

*late to try to begin anew. May we continue to focus on the meaning and purpose of our life on earth. Our lives are not about us. May we boldly give generously of ourselves, our time, and our blessings to those in need, trusting fully and abandoning ourselves to Divine Providence. May we continue to pray and hope in God's mercy, as we look forward to sharing in the triumph of Jesus in His resurrection. May we teach our children the good news of God's love and His wish to be loved in return.*

*May the peace, love, and joy of our risen Lord and Savior abound in our hearts, our families, and our communities always and throughout our lifetime.*

*We remain your loving brother and sister in Christ,*

*Lito and Cecile Cervantes*