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Lenten Message 2021

Pope Francis

Lent is “a time for renewing faith, hope and love” through prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the sacrament of penance, Pope Francis said in his message for Lent, which began Feb. 17. The message, released at the Vatican Feb. 12, said fasting “involves being freed from all that weighs us down — like consumerism or an excess of information, whether true or false,” while hope can be as simple as offering a kind smile to another person. The pope said love in this time of COVID-19 can mean “caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned and fearful” because of the pandemic. Quoting often from his encyclical “Fratelli Tutti,” Pope Francis said “the path of poverty and self-denial” through fasting, “concern and loving care for the poor” through almsgiving and

“Love rejoices in seeing others grow. Hence it suffers when others are anguished, lonely, sick, homeless, despised or in need.”

“childlike dialogue with the Father” through prayer “make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity.” He also stressed the importance of going to confession during Lent. “Having received forgiveness ourselves, we can offer it through our willingness to enter into attentive dialogue with others and to give comfort to those experiencing sorrow and pain,” he said. The message follows, copyright © 2021 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Jesus revealed to his disciples the deepest meaning of his mission when he told them of his passion, death and resurrection, in fulfillment of the Father’s will. He then called the disciples to share in this mission for the salvation of the world.

In our Lenten journey toward Easter, let us remember the One who “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). During this season of conversion, let us renew our *faith*, draw from the “living water” of *hope* and receive with open hearts the *love* of God who makes us brothers and sisters in Christ.

At the Easter Vigil, we will renew our baptismal promises and experience rebirth as new men and women by the working of the Holy Spirit. This Lenten journey, like the entire pilgrimage of the Christian life, is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Christ.

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving, as preached by Jesus (cf. Mt 6:1-18), enable

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