



*Diocese of Fall River*  
*Office of the Bishop*  
*Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.*

February 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings to all of you and blessings as another Lenten season begins.

We enter this Lent in a very different way than we are used to; although we had hoped for a return to our traditions and services, God has another plan. While it may be difficult to see now, we can be assured it is a more perfect plan and one from which He will bring forth many blessings.

The beginning of Lent traditionally means going to church and receiving ashes as well as making the promise and the commitment that we will sanctify this holy time. Whether or not we can receive ashes or if we find them distributed very differently, it does not alter our response to the Lenten call to make this a time of conversion and sanctification.

While Ash Wednesday ushers in the Lenten season, it is not the ashes that will make our Lent more or less holy. Ashes merely remind us of the dust from which God made us, and that each of us is called to repent and believe in the Gospel. What makes Lent holy and spiritually enriching is our commitment to grow in faith, to care and love for our neighbor, and to reaffirm our desire to enter into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

The Lenten season, through the spiritual practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, refocuses our attention to our lifelong journey of conversion. We are to spend these 40 days seeking, through our prayer, sacrifice and giving, how God is calling us to make this world a better place.

Let us acknowledge all our merciful and loving God has done for us. In grateful recognition, let us do our part to cooperate with the sanctifying graces given us to be Christ in the world.

My hope and my prayer for each of you, your families, and parish communities, is that all will experience this Lent as a genuinely holy time, despite all that we are facing. I know we anxiously await the day when we can return to celebrate together our faith, our beloved Sacraments, our spirit of community, and our loving God. As we wait, let us make Lent be a time of sanctification, of conversion, of molding us into better people, so in turn we can affect change in our world, making it a better place. May God bless all of you with a very blessed Lenten season.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.  
Bishop of Fall River