



Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis Consilium Internationale

Prot. n. 3800

Rome, March 5th, 2025
Ash Wednesday

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent has begun today, on Ash Wednesday. We have entered in a 40 days period of time of preparation. This is a beautiful period of the (liturgical) year, which prepares us for the greatest feast ever: the Easter, the feast of our salvation.

What was the season of Lent for Saint Francis? He gave a special importance to the Lent in his life, as we can read in his biographies. He celebrated Lent not only before Easter (cf. Fioretti VII), but he also had a special period of Lent in preparation for other feasts. The best known is his preparation for the feast of St. Michael. For these days he always withdrew and went to a special place.

We often hear words, sentences about the Lent in a negative context: what should not be done, what is not permitted, what has to be given up. Sometimes we have this same way of thinking, too. We often use such words like 'give up', 'retain' or 'abandon'. We often focus on things we should not do instead of what we should do, or what we should do better or more.

Our life is a life of penitence, but this does not mean that it should be a sad life. Let us discover, why is this really a part of the Feast, because the preparation already belongs to it. Saint Francis did live his life in penitence, but he had a joyful life, because he always rejoiced inside, in spite of the hardships he had to experience in his body and around him among the brothers. Lent is not a sad season of the year. It is a preparation; it is a time of possibilities. Penitence is a way to turn to God, a way to seek his will and to live accordingly. This period of the year gives us the opportunity, that like Saint Francis, we examine ourselves, both individually and also in the fraternities. Do I live, do we live according to God's plan? What is God's plan with me, with us? Do I live, do we live accordingly?

In the penitential part of the Holy Mass, we pray at least every Sunday: "I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts, in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do". I invite all of you: let us think about these four things, and contemplate on them, examining ourselves.

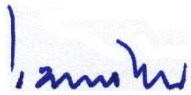
Let us examine ourselves in the fraternities, reconciling with each other as well, thinking about the consequences of our thoughts, words, actions in the life of the fraternity. What are those thoughts of us that most offend God and each other? What are the words we say that most destroy the spirit of the fraternity by hurting God and one another? What do we do against God and against each other? What are our omissions, what do we not do but should be done to build the fraternity, to build the Kingdom of God? I invite you to dedicate some

time both individually and together to these four important things to be contemplated, thus stepping onto the road of reconciliation with God and with one another.

Let us dedicate some time to these questions: not only as a preparation for the next confession, but let us dedicate some hours or even some days, or some meetings of the fraternity – we have 40 days for this – to find the roots: how and why do I act against the will of God, in my thoughts, in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do? I invite you to turn the Lent into a period of time when through reconciliation and penance we can rebuild ourselves and we can rebuild our fraternities, thus doing our part also in rebuilding the Church.

May God give us a lot of joy, deep thoughts, clear considerations, so that we can find God's plan in our life and thus we can arrive to Easter in a renewed spirit. May Saint Francis, Saint Elisabeth of Hungary and Saint Louis of France help us on this road!

With heartfelt fraternal greetings,
your brother and your minister



Tibor Kauser
General Minister OFS

