

## Fr. Tom PC , SAC

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# A Call to Holiness

Beloved People of God,

St. Paul reminded his Corinthian community that as Christians they had been “called to be holy” (1Cor 1:2). Holiness is the unique quality that makes God divine and different from all created realities. Thus, we cannot become holy on our own but only through contact with God, which transform a person, place, or thing into something sacred. During Lent we are invited to focus on God’s presence and on our desire for conversion and transformation into greater holiness. Pope St. John Paul II noted that “Lent is an effort to purify the heart of the sin that burdens it. To live Lent means conversion to God by means of Jesus Christ.” Pope Benedict XVI encouraged us to make Lent “a time to effect a deep conversion in our lives and so be transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit.” And Pope Francis reminded us that “Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply.”

Catholics have traditionally expressed sorrow for sin and the desire to live as genuine disciples of Christ through the three traditional Lenten disciplines of **fasting, almsgiving and prayer** which help to turn us toward Christ as the true source of happiness.

**Fasting and abstinence** practiced as the Church instructs is a good beginning. A bodily way to remind ourselves that we need God above all things, fasting is also a sacrifice, a gift back to God of our heart’s intent to depend more completely on God. The interior free desire to deepen our relationship to God is the essence of a Lenten fast.

**Almsgiving** readjusts our priorities while it expresses both our love of neighbor and our trust in God. A free gift to those in need confirms our basic trust in Providence while concretely helping those in need. Just as we fast without starving ourselves, we give alms without jeopardizing our security or that of our family. The point is to give from the heart.

**Prayer** is a recognition that we need help to turn back to God. From daily Mass to the Rosary to Centering Prayer to the Stations of the Cross to Eucharistic Adoration, the Church encourages a wealth of prayerful practices.

**Stations of the cross:** They offer strength in times of suffering. Praying the Stations of the Cross reminds us that we are not alone in our suffering: Jesus suffers with us. He chose to embrace every aspect of human life, including suffering and death “*If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*” (Luke 9:23)

### 7 Benefits of Praying the Stations of the Cross

1. It gives us a way to make a spiritual pilgrimage.
2. We can gain a plenary indulgence to shorten our time in Purgatory.
3. Praying the Stations of the Cross helps inspire deep prayer.
4. We can look at suffering from a different perspective.
5. Praying this devotion helps us grow in our love for God.
6. Praying the stations helps us to become holy.
7. We learn to hope in the promise of salvation.



The key to praying the Stations of the Cross well is *with sincerity of heart*. Please plan to prayerfully participate in this very personal walk with Jesus. Come, just as you are. This can be a moving experience for individuals or families.

God Bless you,  
Fr. Tom PC, SAC