Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

During this Holy Season of Lent we are invited to meditate on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and how it applies to our everyday lives. When a person encounters suffering in their life, they can initially feel as if they are victims, slaves of the suffering or perhaps even abandoned by God. As followers of Jesus Christ, our mindset must be completely different. When suffering comes our way, we must praise God not because of it but in spite of it. We must stand on the surety of our faith in Jesus Christ that we are not alone and that God has a plan and purpose for our life. The Holy Scriptures reveal these truths to us. Immediately we must acknowledge that we are sharing in the suffering of Christ (we are in union with him) and that like Christ, our suffering can be a blessing for others. What do I mean by this?

I know this woman whose daughter committed suicide years ago. As a result of her suffering, she went for training in bereavement counseling and she started a suicide support group in the diocese for family members who were suffering. She has done this for years in our diocese and her great suffering has becoming a blessing for others. Her grief and suffering brought her deeper intimacy with the Lord and she has seen how leaning into the cross of her life, with Christ, it has brought many to redemption and freedom. We are invited to do the same with our suffering. The Lord can do this with us and for us if we but come to Him.

We celebrate Easter Sunday in a few weeks and then the first Sunday after Easter is Divine Mercy Sunday. As a parish we will be celebrating Divine Mercy Sunday on, April 11, 2021. How? I will be leading a prayer service in the Church from 2:30pm - 4:00pm. The prayer service will consist of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, readings from scripture, praying the chaplet of Divine Mercy (which consists of various prayers which Jesus gave to Sister Faustina to give to the world in 1931. This chaplet is prayed on ordinary rosary beads), the sorrowful mystery of the rosary, singing and the opportunity to venerate the image of the Divine Mercy and the relic of Saint Faustina. All are welcome to join us.

As we continue our Lenten journey together, below is a little reflection on what we can fast from and feast on this Lent.

A Different Kind of Fasting

Fast from judging others…Feast on Christ dwelling in each
Fast from seeing differences…Feast on the Spirit in all life
Fast from apparent darkness…Feast on the reality of Light
Fast from thoughts of illness…Feast on the healing power of God
Fast from words that pollute…Feast on phrases that support and affirm
Fast on discontent…Feast on gratitude
Fast on anger…Feast on patience
Fast from worry…Feast on trust in God’s Providence
Fast from complaining…Feast on appreciation
Fast from hostility…Feast on non-violence
Fast from bitterness…Feast on forgiveness
Fast from self-concern…Feast on compassion for others
Fast from discouragement…Feast on hope
Fast from lethargy…Feast on enthusiasm
Fast from idle gossip…Feast on prayerful silence
Fast from suspiciousness…Feast on Trustful Relationships
Fast from the shadows of injustice…Feast on the Son of Justice

Have a great week and remember that with God you can do the unthinkable, unimaginable and forgive what you think is unforgiveable.

Peace and blessings, Father Charles