Lent 2016

My Dear Friends:

The Season of Lent has become, and is, an ideal time for reflection on one's lives and to become more engaged in devotional and spiritual enrichment exercises. The Church has often seen Lent as a time to prepare for penitence, baptism, and bringing people closer to God in various ways. Individuals and groups engage in reading and studying the Bible, self-examination and prayer, selfless giving and fasting, as they prepare themselves for Easter.

The forty days of Lent (excluding Sundays which are small celebrations of Easter and are therefore occasions of joy) are symbolic of Jesus' time in the wilderness after His baptism, and before He began His ministry. During that time, he was tempted by the devil, and yet remain faithful to God, His Father.

As has been the custom at Holy Sacrament, these past five years to engage in biblical study and teaching on Sundays and Wednesdays during Lent, we will again be involved in such an exercise. This year, our Lenten Study will focus on some of "The Hard Sayings of Jesus," in a series I have called "He said WHAT?" While some of His words give us faith, hope, and love, others are difficult to hear, to understand, and to accept. Nevertheless, regardless to whether Jesus' sayings are easy to embrace or difficult to accept, they open a window for us to know who He really is, what He thought and taught, how He lived while on this earth. Additionally, Jesus' sayings give us examples of how we are expected to live.

During this Lent, we will be examining some of these more complex sayings with the hope of getting a better understanding of what they mean, and how they are to be applied in our lives today. We will analyze whether they are to be taken literally or figuratively, do they apply to all situations or only some, and what kind of life change are they expected to promote in us. Throughout the centuries, these tougher saying have evoked numerous questions and concerns, even to the extent of challenging the legitimacy of Jesus, what He said, and by extension the Bible as a whole.

I invite you to be a part of our Lenten services and program, the teaching sessions during the Sunday morning Eucharist and the discussion exercises on Wednesday nights. I hope and pray that we will have an invigorated and spiritual-filled Biblical study and that your questions will be answered.

I wish you and your loved ones a blessed and holy Lent.

Every Blessing!

Father Tony