

2023 LENTEN APPEAL



Dear Friend of St. Lawrence,

Lately in prayer, I've been captured by a verse from 1 John: "The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments" (2:3). I heard it in Mass during the Advent season and it rang startlingly true in my spiritual life. The reason that we undertake ascetical practices during Lent, or any season, is to more deeply realize our need for God and His intense desire to fill that need in us.

Ever since an encounter with the living God shortly after graduating high school, prayer has been an essential component of living the faith. But what has changed over time is how consistent my prayer is. By prioritizing prayer at a consistent time every day, I am showing myself that God is the highest priority in my life. The way I approach Lenten prayer is not necessarily to spend significantly more time praying, but rather to reflect on what has been most fruitful in my prayer life in the current season, and on how I can plant more seeds to cultivate greater fruit in Lent. Last year, I kept my car rides silent and used that time to reflect on my day with the Lord.

Fasting has always been difficult for me. I have the tendency to try to do far too much and subsequently fail and become discouraged. But Lent has become a season of focusing on one place where I can sacrifice a little bit more. For how difficult fasting is for me, I am convinced that it is that much more powerful for my spiritual life. The more I fight my own desires of the flesh and choose to sacrifice, the more I am reminding myself what is really important. My experience of fasting being difficult shows me it is in the struggle where the value lies. I used to beat myself up over failing at my fasts, but now I am able to view it as a reminder that I am weak and in need of a Savior.

Almsgiving has really come to life for me since graduating. The opportunity to work and earn income, so as to be able to give to others, is a beautiful thing. I went into my job as a teacher knowing that the money that I am earning is not really mine. It is the Lord's gift to me and that mindset frees me to be able to give more readily. I am excited to pray about what particular cause I would like to give to during Lent this year. Almsgiving can be more than just money, it can also be your time or your talents. That was helpful for me to recognize as an undergraduate student before having a stable income. Almsgiving used to be a source of stress for me. I used to ask God fearfully, "But what if there is not enough left for me?" And His response was always asking me to give so that He could in turn provide for me in an even deeper way. Little by little I am learning how to surrender to that call to give, even if the fear is still present.



In all of these practices, the goal is not to prove to God how much I love Him or how good I am. Rather, it is more to show myself that I know God and I trust Him. The more I adhere to prayer, the more I am ready to choose to sacrifice for Him in fasting or almsgiving. And the times when I put off prayer, forget about my fast, or skimp on my almsgiving, really just shows me how much more I need God in my human weakness. These practices actually reveal to us in deeper ways our need for God, and our need for a Savior as we near Good Friday and eventually Easter Sunday.



My encouragement to you is to enter prayer with an open disposition on where He is inviting you to grow this Lent. Whether the call to growth may be spending more time in prayer, fasting on the one thing that will stretch you to run to Christ, or giving to a ministry that radically changes the lives of countless students. As an alumna who received profound formation due to campus ministry, I'd like to invite you to give today to St. Lawrence Newman Center at umncatholic.org/donate or by calling Joe Geiger at (612) 261-2811 to find out how your gift can have the greatest impact.

In Christ,
Catherine Myers
Class of '22

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