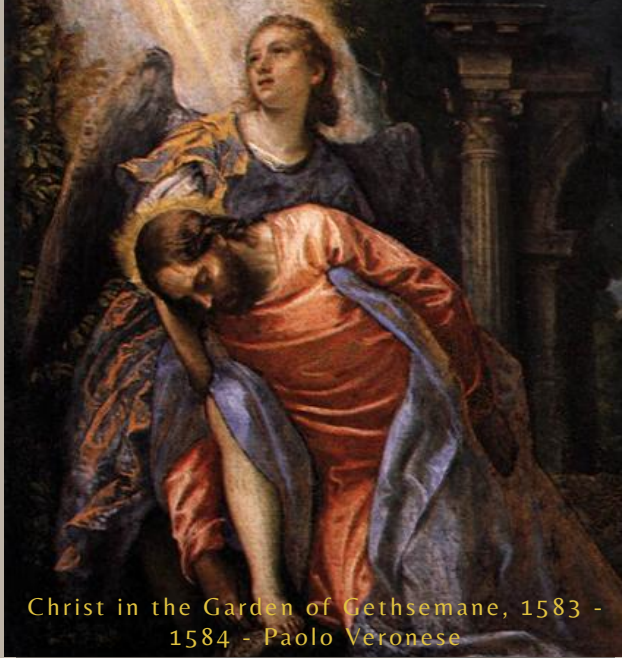


Lenten Pastoral Letter

FROM BISHOP MURPHY

18 February 2026



With Ash Wednesday, we begin our journey of Lent in 2026. This annual spiritual pilgrimage towards the Risen Lord at Easter consists of forty days. The number forty is in commemoration of the forty years God's people were in the desert before the promised land and the forty days that the Lord spent in the desert in preparation for his public ministry. We too, likewise, are in training, spiritual training in this penitential season of Lent.

As the Lord endured three temptations, for our sake, in order that we might know how to combat them, so we are all called to fortify our wills in three specific domains (all good things come in threes): prayer, fasting and works of charity or alms-giving.

1. Prayer.

Every good relationship is based on communication. It is vital component of every personal relationship - a real connection needing to be made. Since Lent is a spiritual time of growth, as our first endeavour, we should desire to upgrade our communication with God. We can achieve that goal by attending daily Mass, praying the Stations of the Cross, the Divine Mercy Chaplet or daily Rosary. It is one way to 'knock at the door' of God's heart.

2. Fasting / Abstinence:

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the entire Church abstains from meat (according to our age) and fasts from some food. But throughout the whole of Lent some form of sacrifice or self-denial is recommended. Why? It is a form of penance and detaches us from any inordinate pleasures we might have. In addition, it strengthens our will power against addictive tendencies. This Lent try going beyond giving up chocolate! Some people try to give up social media. Is it not true that we all could be less attached to technology this Lent!

3. Alms-giving.

It is an old word that means to give unto those in need. So we promote our Project Compassion endeavours and works of mercy to those who are doing it tough. But true charity extends beyond material goods; it encompasses acts of kindness. Perhaps, we could give up some of our time and visit someone who is alone in a nursing home or recently widowed. Whatever, we do, let us become instruments of God's love by bringing hope and healing to a broken world - and acting with kindness, forgiveness and reconciliation.



Let us conclude, by asking Saint Francis on this 800th anniversary of his transition into eternity to inspire us in these three domains: something for God, something for self and something for others. Each of these domains, in turn, will increase our faith, hope and love.

O Lord make me an instrument of your peace.

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



The Descent from the Cross, 1435 - van der Weyden