



*“As Brothers and Sisters of Penance,
any day is a good day for repentance and conversion...
How much more strongly this daily call to conversion
should resonate in our hearts during the Holy Season of Lent!”¹*

As Lent Begins

Beloved National Family,
It’s our season. Time to redouble our efforts.
Lent is upon us, beckoning us.

We seek a meaningful Lent. A fruitful Lent. So, what will we “do” for Lent?
Where is the Lord leading me? Will I really hear his voice in the desert?

I’m stressed. Worrying too much about too many things.
“Therefore... let us be very much on our guard that, under the guise of some reward or assistance, we do not lose or take our mind away from God.” (Francis, the Earlier Rule)

You mean, just sit here and pray? When so much needs to be done?
“Trust in the Lord ... and he will direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)
*“Oh, let all who thirst, come to the water...
Why should you spend your life... except for the Lord?” (Isaiah 55)*

As I sought meaning, the meaningful way opened. I heard His voice in the desert.
“A voice of one calling in the wilderness...” (Mark 1:3)

It was in the desert that “meaning” found me. I know now what I need to do. Peace overflows.
“You prepare a feast for me My cup overflows with blessings. (Psalm 23)

A feast? Yes, right here in the desert! Fasting from worry. Feasting on trust.
The joy of the Lord is my strength! (Nehemiah 8:10)

My Lenten journey has begun. I’m on my way. But I did not get here on my own. I am blessed to share this journey with you, my brothers and sisters who mean so much to me.
May the grace of the Holy Spirit, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy father St. Francis, and the fraternal bonds of community always be my help, so that I may reach my goal of perfect Christian love. (From the Rite of Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order)

When I sat down to write this message, I had a very different one in mind. But this is the message that got written. What a blessing it is to be on this Lenten journey with you! Honestly, I would not be where I am at without you. Thank you for being my brothers and sisters in Christ, Francis and Clare.

Peace, love and Lenten joy,
Jan

¹ Deacon Tom Bello OFS, “Conversion Times Three” - Minister’s Message, February 2013 (see NAFRA Website), also found in Tom’s book “For All the Saints” pgs 29-33.