

# Minister's Insights

## I bear only a *sliver* of Your cross...

By Patrick Mendés, SFO  
National Minister

As we move through Lent and our usual acts of penance, fasting and almsgiving, I would like to share with you a prayer sent me by an SFO couple, who are very dear to me: “Remind me often that in carrying my cross, I carry Yours with You. And though I bear a sliver only of Your cross, You carry all of mine except a sliver in return.”

In our Lenten journey, are we carrying heavy personal burdens? Have we taken the time to reflect on them and see the many, often small ways, the Lord has carried and lightened our burdens – our sliver of the cross?

As we carry our crosses – only a sliver of the Lord’s, article #7 of the Holy Rule would be an excellent source for our contemplative prayer. “United in their vocation as brothers and sisters of penance and motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion.’ Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.”

In the Prologue to the Holy Rule we read: “All who love the Lord with their whole heart, soul, mind and all their strength and love their neighbors as themselves, hate their bodies with their vices and sin, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, produce worthy fruits of penance.”

I’ve just laid a little bit of groundwork for some ideas I want to share with you about our Lenten journey. A journey needs a road map, because if you don’t know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else!

Begin the journey well fortified. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are food for the journey. Eat and drink regularly, lest you become dehydrated and confused.

Read the gospels more each day – they will keep you familiar with the terrain.

Make a stop at that local church and pray the Stations of the Cross. This very Franciscan devotion invites us

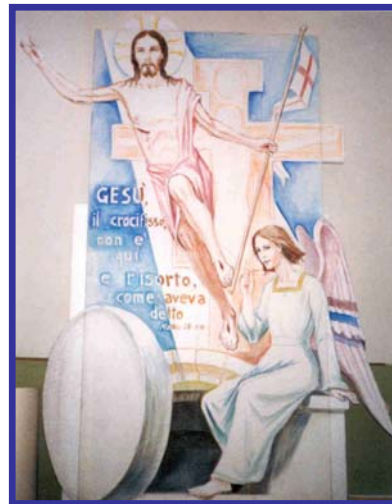
to reflect on the total and unconditional love of Christ for us – not only did He become a human being because of His great love for us, he bore the Cross of our sins for that same great love. We have the opportunity to develop a greater sense of gratitude in this devotion.

As you travel the Lenten Road, stop along the way, as did the Good Samaritan, and visit the sick and lonely who are homebound, in hospitals or in nursing homes. Do you have a little extra time on your journey to your Easter destination? Can you use it to help at the parish pantry or local outreach dining room for the homeless?

As you reach the place where you will lay your head each night of your journey, the time honored practice of the nightly examination of conscience invites us to review our day and thank the Lord, poor and crucified, for helping us with the things we did well and to His glory that day and for forgiving us where we didn’t measure up.

As you complete your journey, you will see the fields of Easter Lilies and feel the presence of the risen Lord, who helped us bear our cross and whose cross, we were privileged to bear, but a splinter.

May the Risen Savior shed His many graces on us, surround us with the love of His Sacred Heart and fill our lives with His abundant blessings!



Contributed by Samy Irudaya, OFM Cap

**GO AND TELL THE WORLD,  
“WITH JESUS WE HAVE RISEN, ALLELUIA,  
DEATH SHALL REIGN NO MORE”**