



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

LENTEN MESSAGE 2024

February 1, 2024

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Lent is upon us – a time to strengthen our relationship with Jesus Christ and seek inner transformation through fasting, prayer, and acts of generosity. The Church assists us by providing many supports. Throughout Lent we are invited to participate in community *celebration of the Holy Eucharist* – on Sundays and at daily Mass during the week. Reading and reflecting on *the Scripture passages of the day* is an excellent practice, as is *any reading* that guides you closer to the Lord.

Throughout Lent, the *Sacrament of Reconciliation* is offered in your Parishes. If you are unable to find a convenient time, contact your Parish Priest who will be happy to find a time suited to your schedule. Most Parishes pray the *Stations of the Cross* as a faith community. Or you can pray them privately at your Parish church. The *Holy Rosary* is always a prayer that promotes inner peace and closeness to the Lord.

The *Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace / Caritas Canada* provides a variety of ways to offer “alms” to brothers and sisters in need through the *Share Lent campaign*. *Create Hope* is the central theme of this campaign for the coming five years. The specific theme this year is *Reaping our Rights*, echoing Pope Francis’ recent reflections in *Laudate Deum*, “Everything is connected” and “no one is saved alone”! We are invited to uphold the rights of peasants, human rights, and environmental rights, ensuring respect for all.

The Cross traced on our forehead on Ash Wednesday reminds us that “*we are going to die*”! If we know we are going to die, we must decide “*how we choose to live*”! On Easter Sunday we renew our Baptismal Promises and are sprinkled with Easter water – washing away the ashes, and renewing the assurances of our faith! We choose to live by faith in Jesus Christ – who saves us and lifts us up!

We enter the Lenten Fast committed to make a difference in our own lives, in the lives of those we love, and in the lives of brothers and sisters in the Global South. Please be generous on *Solidarity Sunday*, March 17, 2023 – the Fifth Sunday of Lent. May God bless us all as we begin this sacred journey.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

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