



## "To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

### Bishop's Note: February 04, 2016 Spiritual Disciplines - Fasting

Perhaps it's because I'm halfway to 108, but time seems to speed up, rather than slow down, the older I get. This year Easter comes early, and so Lent comes very early - Ash Wednesday is in just one week away!

Over the next few weeks, I will be focusing on Spiritual Disciplines, both for the season of Lent, and for a lifetime with the Lord.

Spiritual Disciplines are those exercises/actions/habits that do not necessarily come to us naturally, but are designed to intentionally develop our relationship with the Lord. Richard Foster, in his book *Celebration of Disciplines*, says: "God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us.... They are God's means of grace." (Pg. 6)

As we enter into this Season of Lent - the forty days of preparation leading to Easter - won't you consider a new Spiritual Discipline? These are not simply designed for a forty day trial - simply to be abandoned on Easter - but for a transformed life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

While there are a number of disciplines, over the next few weeks I'd like to focus on Fasting, Prayer, Service, Simplicity, Spiritual Direction, Solitude, and Reconciliation.

In the church there are traditional days of fasting, which include Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fasting can be defined in many ways including forgoing all food and drink for 24 hours, forgoing food but drinking water, or forgoing food during daylight hours and only having a very small and simple meal in the evening. You should be wise and discerning regarding your own physical requirements - for example, people with diabetes or hyperglycemia should not fast. For me personally, I like to fast with no food but drinking water on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and then on Fridays I'll fast during the daylight hours and have just a very simple meal in the evening.

So why fast? Fasting has a unique way of turning our eyes on God. In his book, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard says: "Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in him a source of sustenance beyond food." (Pg 166) This is why fasting can be very significant when combined with intense or extended periods of prayer. Jesus demonstrates this spiritual discipline with his forty days of fasting while battling Satan in the desert, immediately following his baptism (Luke chapter 4).

As you fast, be sure to spend the time you'd normally sit down to a meal to sit down with the Lord for prayer.

I pray you all a Blessed Lent!

Bishop Menees