

Ash Wednesday

My Dear Parishioners and Friends,

With the observance of Ash Wednesday, we have begun the liturgical season of Lent. These forty days of Lent afford us an annual opportunity to reflect seriously on the Passion of the Lord as it relates to our own lives. Since life is so fragile, we should never take for granted our dear family and friends or the many liberties which our nation affords us. Rather, we thank almighty God for all of these blessings which He has lavishly poured out upon us as individuals, as a nation, and as a Church. In short, we count our blessings and recognize that Jesus did not promise his disciples a rose garden but, instead, a cross. *“If anyone wishes to follow after me, let him take up his cross and follow in my footsteps.”*

So, this is in part what we are doing this Lent as Catholics and as Americans: We are taking up our cross and following in His footsteps; we are also helping others to take up their crosses. Consider the many people along the Way of the Cross who assisted Jesus on that first Good Friday: the women of Jerusalem who offered Jesus comfort, Simon the Cyrene who was merely passing by and lifted the heavy burden off Jesus’ shoulders, Veronica who wiped the sweat and blood from the Master’s face, Joseph of Arimathea who provided his own tomb for Jesus’ burial, and Mary and John who prayed at the foot of the cross. All of these characters played a vital role in Jesus’ Passion, and their charity is, without doubt, fondly remembered by our Lord.

Monsignor James Watkins