

**Friday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent  
February 23, 2018**

Lent never lets you get comfortable, does it? Jesus pushes us to see beyond our comfortable notions. There is a tendency, even among us called to minister to the Church to make things easy on ourselves. Jesus does not allow it. We cannot just say, “at least I didn’t kill anyone.” This is not the measure of blessedness. Our Lord teaches us: “Whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.” This is the level of holiness. For us who are called to lead the people, this is the standard we must attain.

Our Lenten practices are not just ways to master our bodies or our habits. They are ways to help us see the world as God sees it. As Pope Francis has continuously reminded us: “It’s necessary to convert, to change mentality, to renounce thinking like before...to convert.” This is what conversion is, it is changing our way of thinking. Through conversion, we see beyond the surface of external purity and peer into the depth of God’s ways.

He demands so much of us. The price of discipleship is to die to self and rely completely on God and his wisdom. We do not get to control the Gospel. We do not get to control the Church, nor the Holy Spirit who enlivens her. The more we try, the more we distance ourselves – and those we lead – from the gospel. This was the great shortcoming of the Pharisees and the scribes. My brothers, do not let yourselves go down that road. Let go of any anger or resentments. Let God show you the beautiful way he sees the world – and do not be afraid of conversion.

**May we live this Lent with passion and fearlessness. Rely on the Church's one Savior and follow him. Let God change your heart, your mind, and your perspectives. God has called you to his service, may you serve according to his will.**