



S S P X

## Letter to Friends and Benefactors

Ash Wednesday  
March , 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Dear Faithful,

Nobody really likes the time of Lent. It requires us to make real, sustained efforts at improving our spiritual lives through penance and mortification. Our fallen nature naturally rebels!

Most of us live in supreme comfort. We are accustomed to having nearly everything we desire within reach. Oftentimes our desires are fulfilled even before we voice them. Terms like moderation, temperance, restraint, discipline, and sacrifice sound old-fashioned to our modern ears. We tend to relegate them quickly to the pious, distant world of the saints. These dour concepts rarely influence our convenient, modern lives.

Our generation has largely lost its sense of discipline, including intellectual discipline. Do you find it difficult to sit at a desk and read an intellectually challenging book or article? Are you easily distracted and do you remember very little of what you read? If we reflect on these questions honestly, most of us will realize that we have an aversion to reading, that our attention span is small, and that our memory easily fails to retain even small amounts of information. Why? Simply because our mind is not strong and trained enough to grapple with even simple arguments.

On the level of morals, we must admit that mortification is generally unknown to modern man, even in our circles where tradition is still strong. For many of us, life has become too easy. We do not understand anymore that achieving something worthwhile inevitably requires sacrifice, and that achieving something great requires great sacrifice! The higher the good we want to acquire, the greater the price we will have to pay. And even though we may understand the necessity of making an effort, we are often too weak and fainthearted, too fickle and restless, too proud and ambitious to commit and persevere. Moreover, it is truly a great thing to do our duties of state well, all of them, every day. Yet we often find this too tedious, too humbling and hidden, too boring, too plain. Consequently, we do our duties poorly, and we are really no different from our contemporaries.

I'm convinced that, as traditional Catholics, we do not cultivate the strength of mind and character needed to cope with the difficulties which the future will inevitably bring. God has called on us to defend our families, our traditions, and even the Church. Yet we are poorly prepared for this battle. We persist in being terrible wimps. We must start to acquire a taste for struggle, both physical and intellectual. A true Christian must be a soldier of Christ, and he must begin his warfare with himself, that is, with his own sins and shortcomings.

The time of Lent will help us with this!

Let us start with the basics. An extraordinary life is built from ordinary devotion to duty. Great things always start small, and only slowly do they develop and mature. Above all else, let us have the humility to dedicate ourselves to the little details of daily life. It takes strength and courage to remain faithful in the face of daily setbacks, failures, and annoyances. Let us persevere in doing our little duties excellently, as perfectly as we can, out of love for God. I fear, however, that only a few will earnestly engage in this daily struggle; but the ones who do will be the productive ones, the ones most pleasing to God.

Society of **St. Pius X**  
District of Canada  
45 Guthrie Avenue  
Toronto, ON, M8Y 3L2  
T (416) 251 0499 ∙ F (416) 251 7430  
toronto@fssp.net ∙ www.sspcx.ca

It is in this spirit of daily fidelity to duty that Bishop Fellay has called the fourth Rosary Crusade. He explains, "We have to put our whole heart, our whole soul into this new crusade, not just being content with the daily recitation of the rosary, but carefully carrying out Our Lady's second request, which is penance. Prayer and penance. Penance, understood certainly as the acceptance of certain forms of self-denial, but especially as the very faithful performance of our duties of state."

Please allow me to give you some practical advice for our Lenten effort.

To perform our daily duties well, we must keep control over ourselves and over our actions at all times. Therefore we should:

- Courageously resist all sinful temptations.
- Never excuse our faults by referring to our dominant temperament. Don't say, "But God made me like this, I can't help it!" What a rotten excuse!
- Bear patiently and even lovingly with the little annoyances of daily life.
- Admit our failures, but get up immediately after every fall, resolved to do better in the future.
- Accept our frailties and limitations while always striving to advance in virtue.

Often forgotten is our duty to deepen our knowledge of the Faith. Reading and study are essential for our spiritual and moral development. Should we neglect this duty, we become intellectually weak. Moreover, to study effectively we need seclusion and silence:

- Silence from work and technology.
- Silence for thought and reflection.
- Silence so that God can speak to us.
- Silence to realize the vanity of this noisy world.

If we use these humble means to root up our sins and to draw closer to God, we will become strong Christians. Fidelity to daily duty will prepare us to practice heroic virtue. This wicked generation needs true heroes, and God is calling us to lead the great combat for the salvation of souls. Will we respond to God's call and fight under his banner? It is the humble banner of perfect fidelity to daily duty, but those who fight under His banner will possess the kingdom of heaven.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away!"  
(Matthew 11:12)

With my best wishes for a holy Lent,

  
Father Jürgen Wegner