



## “SO MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE GIVEN UP” (IT’S A WONDER ANYONE BELIEVES!)

Ash Wednesday arrived this year on 14 February (Saint Cyril, pray for us. Saint Methodius, pray for us. Saint Valentine, pray for us.), and with it came the Holy Season of Lent: the annual period of forty days and forty nights when Baptized Catholics throughout the world don't simply **pray, fast, and give alms**, but we pray **more fervently**, fast **more sacrificially**, and give alms **more generously**; implying that we stay engaged in those devout practices (albeit perhaps with less intensity) even when we've buried Lent and entered into the Glorious Season of Easter! Ask anyone however: "What are you doing for Easter?", and more than likely they will look at you with a furrowed forehead and answer: "Huh"?

We get that look and response (and perhaps are guilty of it ourselves) because all too often (if not always), when the Holy Season of Lent ends, so too ends the **prayer**, the **fasting**, and the **almsgiving**. More than likely we not only bury Lent, but we bury all of the devout practices that helped us to grow in holiness as disciples of Christ! And why? Why have we "given up" praying more fervently with attendance at daily Mass? Why have we "given up" fasting more sacrificially from breakfast on Wednesday? Why have we "given up" giving alms more generously with 25 cents more a week? Lent is the Season for "giving up" not Easter.

Easter needs to be the Season when we labour to make the practices of Lent a daily part of our game plan. And so the Church throughout the world uses this Season to joyfully celebrate her newest team players: those Baptized at the Easter Vigil (welcome Eva Pichardo)! On this Day however, the Fourth Sunday of Easter/Good Shepherd Sunday, the Church prays for a more active participation in the game by the "oldtimers" on the team: the youth whom God is calling to Priesthood and Religious Life like our own Brother PT and Sister Marie Meaghan.

Yes, our universal remembrance of the Lord's Resurrection on Easter Sunday needs to be played out **every day** of this fifty-day season by **every member** of the team! Within that remembrance (nourished by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving) we will find all that we need – in imitation of Christ the Good Shepherd – to meet those who are looking downcast (cf. Saint Luke XXIV:17), weeping (cf. Saint John XX:11), afraid (cf. Saint John XX:19), and doubting (cf. Saint Matthew XXVIII:17) with the Peace of Christ. When **all** the Baptized (not just our Priests and Religious) follow the Good Shepherd in this way, then the world will experience what the Church professes: "Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando. Dux vitae mortuus regnat Vivus"!/Death and Life faced each other in an amazing duel. The Lord of life had died; but now, alive, He triumphs!" (*The Easter Sequence*)

### Tweet of the Week from @VeniDomum

If Christians want to see more of Christ at home, work, and school, then Christians have to roll away the stones from their hearts and let Him rise!



READINGS FOR  
29 April 2018, the Fifth Sunday of Easter



1st Reading: Acts IX: 26-31; Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22;  
2nd Reading: I John III: 18-24; Gospel: Saint John XV: 1-8