



Office of the Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski

PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT
To the Reverend Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful of the
Eparchy of the Holy Family of London

1.03.2020

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

From the moment my appointment to the Eparchy of the Holy Family of London was announced on 15 January, I have been preparing myself to become your bishop and shepherd. My enthronement at our cathedral is set for April 7, the Feast of the Annunciation. And in London quite a few people are assisting me in the planning and preparations that go into such an event. There is much to coordinate, with guests attending from near and far. Of course, I am sure that all of us have prepared for something important in our lives, packing suitcases for a long trip, studying for exams, planning for some celebration. However, I have also been in situations where I did not have enough time to prepare. And when things did not work out as well as they could have, I realized that I should have made time.

My dear friends, we are entering into the time of Great Lent, the forty-day period during which the Church invites us to prepare ourselves properly for Easter, the greatest of Feasts, the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! In this busy world of ours what are some things that we can do to prepare ourselves for Holy Pascha?

First of all, we can intensify our prayer life, which means that if we have the possibility to attend the various liturgical services that will be celebrated in our parishes during Lent, we should do so. If for some reason we are unable to attend our Lenten services, each day we can make a special effort to spend some time in prayer, either alone, or with family members, or even with friends.

Lent is traditionally a time for fasting and abstinence, in other words, a time to willfully deprive ourselves of some pleasure, of some activity we enjoy, and even a time to experience hunger. We exercise self-denial to practice control over ourselves and our sinful pride. We certainly don't fast so that we can look devout before others. Most of all, we fast as a sign of spiritual hunger for the Lord. We recognize that Christ can't fill our hearts if we are full of ourselves. Certainly, we should try to look deeply into our own hearts to set things right with God and with our neighbor, and receive the sacrament of reconciliation (holy confession). We have been invited to a wedding feast. We need to make sure that our wedding garment is ready (see Mat 22:1-14)!

Great Lent is also a time to be more sensitive to those who are perhaps in more need than we are. We can do that by supporting parish charitable initiatives, by volunteering at one of the many community social service providers in our neighbourhood, or by making a donation to some needy cause or person according to our ability. We also could resolve to visit someone who may be lonely, in a hospital or nursing home. In short, by purposely preparing ourselves for Easter we want to focus our attention on the Beatitudes that Jesus has given us as a guide to live by (see Mat.5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23), on the blessings that come with sacrifice, and the joy that awaits us.

Let us make this Lenten journey together by praying for each other and encouraging one another. During these days, while I am still in Canada packing my things, taking care of all work permit and visa requirements, I continue to keep all of you in my prayers. I look forward to celebrating Easter with you, to the joy of meeting you, my spiritual flock, and being your shepherd. Kindly pray for me and for all of those who are helping me in this time of preparation.

I continue to place each of you under the protection of the Holy Family, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, and the holy and righteous St. Joseph the Betrothed.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you!

+ Kenneth

+KENNETH