



Lent 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Soon after learning that I was to be the next Bishop of Ogdensburg, I discovered that I needed to select an Episcopal motto, a brief phrase that would express the theme of my future ministry as a bishop. I was inspired to select two simple words of invitation by Jesus to his disciples: ***Follow Me***. These words continually challenge me to be a faithful disciple of Jesus in my journey of faith in this life, in good times and bad. They motivate me in my ministry as your bishop to offer the best possible guidance in all our earthly journeys of discipleship.

Lent 2024 calls each of us to follow the poor, humiliated and rejected Jesus. We recommit ourselves to grow ever closer to Him, particularly at this moment in history when such a commitment encounters so many challenges. Are we willing to follow Jesus even through the real struggles we face in trying to be faithful today? Can we overcome the weariness, frustration and confusion that wells up within us because the way of following Jesus has clearly become the *Way of the Cross*?

This Lent can be a pivotal juncture in our faith journeys. First and foremost, we must grow closer to Jesus and discover the hope and confidence that such a relationship brings. We ask ourselves what concrete steps am I willing to take this Lent to strengthen our relationship with Jesus? Does my prayer life need to be tweaked? Am I committed to participating even more attentively at Eucharist? Will I celebrate the Sacrament of Penance more regularly, spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, read Scripture; and assist in my parish's outreach to the needy,

These Spiritual Exercises are among many others that help us tend to our relationship with our Lord. With ongoing growth in my prayer life and nourishment by the Sacraments, I can confidently participate in the mission of Christ, knowing Jesus is always by my side. Let us seek the intercession of Mary, Our Lady of Hope and Mother of the Eucharist, in our Lenten efforts to draw closer to Jesus and His Body, the Church.

God's blessings and prayers for a fruitful Lent for you and your loved ones!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg