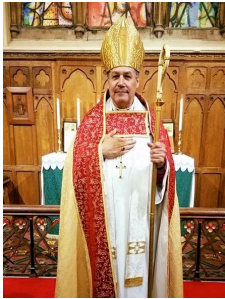




## OFFICE OF THE PRIMATE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION

*"Repent, and believe the Gospel."*



ON Ash Wednesday, Christians everywhere began the solemn days of prayer, fasting, and self-denial that mark the holy Season of Lent. The focus of Lent is not only upon sin but also upon our redemption; it is not only about ourselves as sinners in need of God's mercy and grace but also about the corporate sin of the world, and God's redeeming love in Christ, the Saviour of the world.

As in days of old in the time of the patriarchs, in the time of the apostles, in the time of the great fathers, the Church universal, with all her faithful, is called back from the life of sin to the life of grace in Jesus Christ. Through the daily readings from Holy Scripture set out in the Prayer Book Lectionary for the Forty Days of Lent, our original conversion to the life of a Christian will be recalled; and through self-examination and repentance, be renewed. Acknowledgement of sin in our life will give way to contrition of heart and soul – the sincere and heartfelt sorrow for our sins, negligences and offences which were the cause of our Lord's Passion and Death. Our contrition, in turn, will be met by God's loving forgiveness, absolution and pardon. The power of Christ's atoning death upon the Cross will seal our forgiveness in the redemption of our souls and bodies, washed and made clean in the blood of His all-sufficient Sacrifice. This is the pattern of Lent; it is the pattern of our redemption.

Lent provides each of us an opportunity to reflect on our lives and on God's place in it. We are exhorted to examine our thoughts, words, and deeds in light of His commandments; and to undergo a *metanoia* -- a change of heart -- that our old lives may be transformed into the likeness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Lent also draws us back to a simpler life -- a life focused on God and His saving actions in our lives. Through fasting and self-denial we are provided opportunities to spend time with God in prayer and meditation. By forsaking some temporal nourishment and entertainment we are able to partake of eternal nourishment -- fortifying our spiritual lives by reading and meditating on God's holy Word, and feeding on the spiritual food of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. We are reminded by our Lord, "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

The pattern of our Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection for the salvation of the world is also the pattern of our own redemption from the power of sin unto eternal life. And the Season of Lent leading to Passiontide and Easter is the journey we must take if we are to "die daily unto sin, and live with Him evermore in the glory of His endless life."

Finally, it is important that we do not forget to practice acts of charity and self-discipline in memory of our Lord's great act of love and self-denial on the Cross. 'Give up' something in order to 'give of' yourself to God and others. Do all as *true* acts of penitence and discipline; remembering that your Father in heaven sees what you do 'in secret' and will reward you, both in this life and in the life to come.

"I therefore invite you, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditation upon God's holy Word."

*+Shane*