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"On The Spirit Of Lent."

The Lenten Pastoral letter of Bishop Chartrand, of Indianapolis, may well guide your observance of this holy season:

"The mind of the Church is the mind of God. The mind of the Church on anything, on everything, is the mind of God on anything, on everything.

"The Church sets apart Lent as a season of penance and prayer; she exhorts the faithful to practice, with greater earnestness and fervour, what is at all times necessary for salvation. 'Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.' -- Luke, 13,3.

"That penance is a distinctly Christian virtue and indispensable, was made sufficiently clear by our Blessed Lord, on numerous occasions.

"The great Apostle St. Paul beautifully describes the spiritual exercise of penance, when he refers to it as 'always bearing about in our bodies the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.' 2 Cor., 4:10. Therein is implied the ennobling motive, therein lies the grandest recompense.

"Were it not for the untiring admonitions of the Church and her ever-ready ministrations to aid man, how many souls would appear before the judgment seat of God wholly unprepared and forfeit an eternity of happiness.

"Living in the atmosphere of modern paganism, some of us may be tempted to complain against the so-called unreasonable demands of our Holy Religion. The inevitable hardships of life, the modern demand on man's nervous system, the artificial lives led by many, the multiplication of luxuries and comforts, make men unfit for the bodily austerities practiced by our forefathers.

"In answer to this complaint we can point to the fact that during the centuries the Church has continually lightened her laws of penance to meet the necessities of the times. As a consequence, comparatively few nowadays are bound to comply with the law of fasting and abstinence.

"The Church, however, cannot permit her children to abandon or forget entirely the need of penance, for she cannot fail in her divine task of teaching the whole doctrine of Jesus Christ. Hence Catholics, who are not obliged to follow the rules laid down by the Church with regard to fasting and abstinence, will find, if they are serious with God, many ways in which to exercise and keep active the virtue of penance, so necessary for our salvation.

"Lent is a season of retirement. Catholics of spiritual refinement will abstain from all wordly amusements and everything which ill comports with the spirit of mortification. Daily assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, daily reception of Holy Communion, regular attendance of the parochial Lenten Devotions, that ever-powerful and elevating prayer, the Way of the Cross, are in keeping with the true spirit of Lenten observance. In the times through which we are passing, acts of self-denial and help, in favor of the poor and needy, will be a most acceptable offering in the alms-box of the wounds of Our Divine Lord.

"We need a screen between penance and fear, and that screen is love. We need something to hide the wood of the Cross, and that something is the mangled body of the world's Redeemer. May the sight and the thought of Christ Crucified enable us to offer to God the best Lent we have ever made."