



**INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING**  
**SOVEREIGN PRIEST**  
**SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART**



March 2, 2017

Dear Members and Friends of the Society of the Sacred Heart,

Greetings from St. Joseph's Oratory in Detroit, where I have come to preach a Lenten day of recollection and speak to the faithful of our new apostolate about the Society of the Sacred Heart. I would like to take this opportunity to address some words to all of you as well as we begin our forty-day pilgrimage. In the penitential season of Advent, we journeyed together to the crib to adore the divine offspring of the Virgin Womb. Now it is rather toward the Virgin Tomb, in which never man was laid, that we make our way, and at the end of this season we shall rejoice to find it empty, for the Savior of the world will have come forth victorious over death.

During these first days of Lent, Holy Mother Church carefully plans for us what should be our program to turn us from sin and kindle our devotion. We are presented with our three great enemies in the spiritual combat – the world, the flesh, and the devil – and given the three weapons which will bring us victory over each of these in turn: almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. On Ash Wednesday, Our Lord spoke to us from the Mount of fasting and physical mortification, and how we are to practice these things joyfully and without ostentation. The following day we hear of the power of prayer to triumph even over the empire of death which the evil one has brought into the world. On Friday Our Lord teaches us how to do good to others – simply and quietly, without seeking the slightest thanks or praise. These teachings are resumed by the Apostle in his Epistle for the First Sunday of Lent, which the Church takes up as her song at Vespers that evening: *in jejuniis, in vigiliis, et in caritate non ficta* – in fastings, in watchings, and in unfeigned charity.

There can be no doubt that the Church presents charity to us as the one indispensable virtue in this time of penance. This is the virtue which St. Paul calls the *bond of perfection*, and on Quinquagesima Sunday he told us that we must consider all our penitential practices during this time and remember: *if I have not charity, I am nothing*.

As we set aside distracting worldly pleasures in order to give ourselves more fervently to prayer and meditation on Our Lord's sufferings, let us resolve to do good to others, especially in our speech, remembering that we shall have no reward for greeting our friends and brethren only. In Gricigliano, our Prior General has long reminded the seminarians not to shun community recreation time during Lent, but rather to make good use of it by speaking to other members of the community with whom they seldom converse. What an easy practice for each of us to adopt after Sunday Mass!

I exhort you to attend the Lenten Masses as often as you can. If daily attendance is impossible for you, committing to just one day besides Sunday each week of Lent, if you are able, would be very fruitful. For progress in the virtues, I refer you to the third part of the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, inviting you to devote special attention to chapters 26-30 on the use of speech. The Church will examine us on this very point halfway through Lent, as Our Lord declares that it is not the food which comes in through the mouth that defiles us, but rather the evil that comes out (Gospel for Wednesday in the third week of Lent).

Please know that you are all in my prayers during this Lenten season. Let us pray for one another especially on the feasts of our holy patrons St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Benedict, and particularly for the five Sister Adorers of the Royal Heart who will make their first vows on March 7.

With my priestly blessing,

In Christo Rege,  
Canon Aaron B. Huberfeld  
Chaplain, Society of the Sacred Heart