

Lent 2016

Introduction

Lent begins early this year. It seems we have just put away the tree, the ornaments, and the wrapping paper and already it's time to receive ashes on our foreheads! We come once again to this sacred, earthy season of Lent, where we remember that it is from dust and earth from which we emerge and one day we shall return to it.

Yes, Lent is the time to acknowledge our sinfulness, but perhaps not to dwell on it. Rather, to be reminded of God's goodness to us and the great gift to humankind that Jesus is. His life, his love, his actions all point to God's abundant love for us. This season of Lent might invite us to plunge ourselves into the daily, ordinary ways that Jesus is present and really see them with new eyes of gratitude.

This Lent might be a reminder of the sobering events in our world this past year. We have seen and known the horrors of terrorism, the violence of wars, the plight of refugees crossing borders, simply looking for safety. In many parts of our world, even right here in Missouri and Illinois we have seen the devastation of natural disasters and flooding and it has seared our hearts. There is a great vulnerability among humankind and yet God's graciousness is also present. We see the unselfishness of so many good people who are stepping forward to help others who suffer terror, loss of homes to flooding, injustices and confusion. These times encourage us to put our differences aside, to let go of offensive attitudes, to come together, to reach out in the hopes of creating a more just and merciful world.

This Lenten season the Women of Providence will use our newest publication, *Providence Alive in Us: Ever Unfolding Mystery* for our Lenten quotes for reflection. Perhaps it will help to deepen within each of us the appreciation we have for our WPC authors who share their gifts with us. Maybe it will cause us to pick up the book again, or for the first time, and read and reflect on the various articles. I invite you to trust the tender providence of God as you begin your Lenten journey. May we see with new eyes the ever unfolding mystery we call Providence!

Barbara McMullen, CDP
Executive Director, WPC



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Women of Providence
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