

## Repent and believe in the gospel - The Lenten call to a Holy Life.

"After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: 'This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'" (*Mk 1:14-15*). This was part of the Gospel Reading of the First Sunday of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, as you received the imposition of ashes, you may have heard as accompanying words: "Repent and believe in the gospel." That is what Christ, speaking to us through the Church on Ash Wednesday and on each day during Lent, invites us to do - to repent and believe in the gospel.

To repent means to change the direction of one's life ever more directly to God; therefore, away from self-centeredness to God-centeredness, away from sin and attachment to sin - indeed away from anything that impedes us from loving God with all our heart, soul and mind and our neighbor as ourselves. Lenten repentance (conversion), at its beginning, demands a firm resolving to do exactly that: to repent, to redirect our lives to God. Throughout Lent we ought regularly renew that resolution; living our lives each day throughout Lent, and each day of our lives, in conformity with the two Great Commandments - wholehearted love of God and of neighbor.

Having made the commitment to observe Lent as a period of repentance (conversion), one must strive to be faithful to that commitment every day. One's approach and prayer to God ought to be that given us in the Responsorial Psalm of the First Sunday of Lent: "Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior" (*Ps. 25:4-5*). Through prayer such as this we open our minds to know God's will for us in each circumstance and event of our daily lives. We also open our wills to receive his grace to do his will - to "Repent and believe in the gospel".

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