



February 14, 2024

House Circular #8  
Subject: Lent

***"Rend your hearts, not your garments,  
and return to the Lord, your God."  
Joel 2:13***

Dear Sisters and Associates,

It seems that we have just put away our Christmas decorations and now we are receiving ashes on our foreheads to signify the beginning of the Lenten Season. In a strange coincidence Ash Wednesday occurs on St. Valentine's Day this year. (According to a "reliable" Google Search, this also happened in 2018 and before that in 1945.) Are there any ways that these two events can be related in our Lenten journey?

What are you to do in your own heart to follow Jesus on your personal 40-day Lenten journey? Is there a "heartfelt" approach that will guide you during this liturgical season? Can you give God space to move within your heart? Can you allow yourself time to notice what God is doing in and through you? Might you be more aware of circumstances in your life that are negatively impacting your spiritual growth? Have you fallen into a time of apathy and indifference in your spiritual practices? Is there space in your heart where something new and different is waiting to emerge? Are you willing to "rend your heart"?

Maybe a challenge for all of us during the 2024 Lenten Season is to focus on our "heartfelt" relationship with God. We might identify behaviors that are stifling our spiritual growth and interpersonal relationships and begin to change them. On the other hand, we might come to a deeper realization and appreciation of the gifts we have been given, be grateful, and share them more graciously with others.

May your "heartfelt" Lenten journey be filled with many insights and blessings so that you can heartily rejoice at Easter.

In Francis and Clare,

*Maureen O'Connor OSF*

Sister Maureen O'Connor, OSF  
Superior