



Dear Sisters,

Once again, we approach the season of Lent, and the Lord places before us the opportunity of taking time more dedicated to prayer. Lent is a perfect moment to return to the simple, to the little, to the hidden. And from there discover our iniquities and cleanse our heart. When we look at the world today, in the midst of this scenario of death and disease, of hopelessness and fear, we are called to be the light of hope, the messengers of God's love and forgiveness. And that light only shines when we nourish it with prayer and silent, expectant contemplation.

During this Lenten season let us renew our determination to allow ourselves to be transformed by the abundance of the mercy of our God. The Holy Father in his Lenten message proposes **fasting, prayer** and **almsgiving**, which are the conditions and expression of our conversion.

PRAYER, which keeps us aware of the Mystery of love that inhabits us. It is a heart-to-heart dialogue, a friend-to-friend conversation. The more we allow ourselves to be fascinated by his Word, the more we will be able to experience his gratuitous mercy towards us. Prayer enables us to embody a sincere faith, a living hope and an effective charity.

Faith calls us to accept the Truth manifested in Christ and testify to it before God and before our brothers and sisters.

Pope Francis tells us that through recollection and silent prayer, we are given hope as inspiration and interior light, illuminating the choices and challenges we face in our mission. In giving hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, putting aside our worries in order to pay attention to the other, either through a smile, a word of encouragement, or simply by listening.

Fasting which is lived as an experience of deprivation, to open our hearts and mercy to those who are in need. Fasting frees us from everything that binds us and moves us to share with the poor and needy, knowing that whatever we do for them,

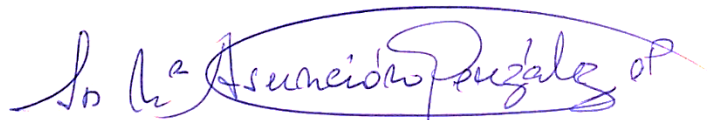
we do it for God himself. Let us ask ourselves how the needs of the poor affect us and how do we act accordingly. The little we have, if shared to others with love, transforms our lives and generates happiness. Sharing, the Pope tells us, makes us more human, while accumulating carries the risk of making us less human, bound by our own selfishness.

Charity is a gift that gives meaning to our life. Living Lent in charity means caring for those who suffer, victims of the scourges of our time, feeling abandoned, full of anxiety of the uncertainty of the future due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Sisters, in this season of Lent, let us examine our life in the light of the Word of God, so that we would be able to change our hearts and learn to live in a more human way. God is beside us and He wants to heal our life. That is why conversion is not something sad, but the discovery of true joy.

Let us ask Mary, our Mother, to keep us determined and vigilant this Lent. Let us ask her to teach us shed our selfishness day by day, to learn to live with joy our freedom as children of God.

My prayer and fraternal embrace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sor Mª Asunción González, O.P.", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Sor Mª Asunción González, O.P.
General Prioress