



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Mailing Address
POST OFFICE BOX F
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
18105-1538

4029 WEST TILGHMAN STREET
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 18104
(610) 437-0755
Fax (610) 433-7822

Lent 2020

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As another Lenten Season unfolds for us, I would like to reflect upon something that is impacting our Church and society greatly: Anger.

It seems everywhere we look, we see expressions of anger. Anger in and at the Church; anger in and at Washington; anger in and among nations; anger in families; anger in social media. In my travels around the Diocese, I often hear many who are concerned about the coarseness in our society.

Perhaps during this Lenten Season, a good way for us to reflect upon the anger in our lives and in society is to do an examination of conscience based on that very popular Lenten devotion, The Stations of the Cross. In these fourteen stops along the way of Our Lord's Passion and Death, we see an example of patience and suffering combined in one total act of selfless love.

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

- ❖ In my own speech, do I in anger condemn another and quickly draw conclusions about a person's motives and intentions?

The Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross

- ❖ When I have a heavy burden placed on me, justly or unjustly, do I react with anger, blame, retribution, or avoidance?

The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

- ❖ Do I take delight in another's misfortune out of the anger I feel for him or her?

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother

- ❖ When trial and sorrow come into my life, do I react with anger, blaming God or others for my testing, or do I seek to be compassionate and accepting of the situation over which I have no control?

The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

- ❖ Does anger overcome me when asked to do something or circumstances demand that I get involved, preferring rather to watch from a comfortable distance, resentful that I have been asked to contribute my time, talent, or treasure?

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

- ❖ Does my anger keep me from showing compassion, especially if I have experienced a lack of compassion from someone else?

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

- ❖ Am I patient with myself when I make the same mistake again, or do I become angry with my lack of perfection and give up?

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

- ❖ Does my anger lead me to be hardened to the plight of others, convincing myself that somehow they are to blame for their situation and therefore absolving myself of any charity toward them?

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls a Third Time

- ❖ Do I create an angry standard in my mind of what persons are worthy of being helped based on my own prejudices and misconceptions?

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Clothes

- ❖ In my anger, do I strip someone of his or her dignity or good name by what I say about them, what I post on social media, or how I act toward them?

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

- ❖ How does my interior anger disfigure my soul and nail my humanity to the cross of hatred, arrogance, and selfishness?

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

- ❖ Does my anger rage to the point that I see another person as irredeemable or without the human dignity of one created by God and saved by the Blood of Christ?

The Thirteenth Station: The Body of Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

- ❖ Do I show respect for the human person or do I judge another as an object of my anger or to be used in a selfish way?

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

- ❖ In my anger, do I emotionally bury a family member, friend, co-worker, or classmate by treating them as if they are "dead to me," shutting them out of my life with no intention of reconciling with him or her?

The anger we sense in the world today is real and powerful. It is not easily rooted out, especially if we see the cause in someone else. This Lent, I ask myself and all the faithful to look inwardly to see how the anger in the world is really rooted in our personal anger, and seek to be reconciled with Our Lord and with those from whom we are estranged.

Psalm 34 tells us,

*Calm your anger and forget your rage;
do not fret, it only leads to evil.
For those who do evil shall perish;
the patient shall inherit the land.*

May God grant all of the peace and forgiveness of a Lenten Season truly lived well so that the Love of Christ will wash over us, bring us to be forgiven and inspire us by His forgiveness to forgive.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown