

St. John The Theologian Ukrainian Catholic Church

From the Desk of Rt.Rev Anton Szymychalski

FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM:

It's our fifth and final week of traveling through Lent. If your journey was an honest one, you must be a little exhausted. Coming face to face with the realities of our life situation isn't always the most pleasant experience, nor is it the easiest of tasks. But Palm Sunday is coming...a ray of hope in our journey.

There's joy in the midst of our confusion, and there is a sense of something great that is yet to happen. Our journey to Easter will not be fulfilling or complete until we have traveled with Christ on the road of His passion. It is impossible for us to appreciate or even to understand the concept of resurrection without the experience of suffering and death.

I'm not speaking of physical pain and death here, but rather about our emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Make an extra effort this week to find your quiet place so as to prepare to share in Christ's Passion. Sit again in silence; breathe

slowly and deeply. Be conscious of what is happening. Feel and listen to your heartbeat...be aware of each breath. Breathe in God's love and exhale your fears and anything that prevents you from listening to the voice of Christ. Be quiet now, and be still, For Christ is speaking to you:

"Dear Friend, how wonderful that you have remained faithful on our journey together. The time will soon be here to make your resolve to change those things you have discovered about yourself that prevent you from experiencing my loving presence every moment of your life. Often these changes will involve pain and a willingness to die to yourself, so that you can experience a new life...so that you can understand the concept of resurrection! Not just the resurrection of the physical, but more importantly of the spiritual. What is physical death but the cessation of life of the body? But spiritual death means that you no longer possess the essence of life...the breath my Father breathed into you at the time He created you in the womb. The breath of the Holy Spirit you received at the time of your Baptism and Confirmation. The divine life that you are gifted with each time you chose to partake of Holy Communion. Indeed, nothing is more tragic than spiritual death, since while still alive physically, spiritually you are starving and are no longer aware. You don't feel my love, because you have chosen not to love. You don't share my life because you are not aware of my life in you. Your divinity has faded because of your choice to stay away and to try to do it on your own. Don't

fear though; for I am with you. Call my name and I will be there to help lift you up from this darkness to a new awareness of life. Travel with me just a bit longer. Be faithful and endure. There is a reward awaiting you that you cannot even imagine; it is incomprehensible to the mind, but can only be experienced by the soul and heart. Through the sometimes dark paths of this journey you will see light. That light is me calling you to come....to let go of yourself. I want you to "Lose yourself in me, so that you can find yourself." If you are willing to do this you will find and experience new life, and you will live in my love. Come then, let's not give up yet... journey with me through this last week and my passion. My passion and suffering reveals to you the power of love. From my cross I cry out: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," to experience resurrection you too must learn to practice forgiveness... to let go of the pain and to bask in your Father's love. This is freedom... this is new life... this is an opportunity to experience resurrection right here on earth.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, you promise that together we can conquer anything. This Lenten journey has been long. I am exhausted. I have discovered so many things about myself and my life that have prevented me from experiencing or sharing your love. I want to be faithful to the end of our journey, but I'm not sure I have the strength to do it. Be with me Jesus and hold me up when I am weak. Wipe the tears from my eyes when I think that my life and actions are greater than Your love. Assure me that your love is greater than anything, so that dying to my old ways and my old self, and sharing in a real way your Passion, I may come to understand and experience Resurrection as a new creation. Amen.