



January 29, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many years ago, a young boy asked his mother, “Why did Jesus die?” She responded, “He died so that we might live.” How profoundly yet how simply did that mother summarize the central mystery of the Christian faith! Do we not proclaim this mystery in every celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice? “Dying, you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.”

On Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, we begin once again our annual Lenten retreat as we receive on our foreheads the blessed ashes and commit ourselves to journeying with Christ Jesus during the forty days of Lent. The journey we begin leads to the Easter Triduum, to that reliving in a solemn and more explicit way the Dying and Rising of Jesus.

Yes, the Lord Jesus, in loving obedience to the will of the Father, gave Himself up to death so that we might live. By sharing in His Death and Resurrection, which we did first at Baptism and which we continue to repeat daily and especially through our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we too die to sin and eternal death so that we might live for Him and in loving service to His people.

Through the three principal works of Lent – prayer, fasting or penance and almsgiving or deeds of mercy, we, in fact, participate in the mystery of the Lord’s Dying and Rising. Prayer, whether personal or liturgical, transforms us more and more into the image of the Lord Jesus, so that we truly are alive in Him. Fasting or penance strengthens us to turn away from sin and to offer reparation for our sins and the sins of others, so that we can live in a new way. Almsgiving or deeds of mercy enables us to give new life to others in their need, whether of body, mind or spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ died so that we might live! This Lent, may we participate more deeply in His dying so that, in turn, we may participate more fully in His Rising to Life and be the instruments of His life to others – His life which is the true source of hope and joy and peace!

Seeking with you this Lent for the grace to die in Christ so that in Him we might live, I remain

Faithfully in Christ,

*+ Paul S. Loverde*

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde  
Bishop of Arlington