



Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Cardinal
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

Lent 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

The season of Lent invites us to turn from sin, to do penance through prayer, fasting and almsgiving and to prepare for the renewal of the promises of our Baptism. It is in Baptism that we are immersed in the saving mystery of Christ's death and resurrection.

In the beautiful story of the *Samaritan Woman at the Well*, which we will hear proclaimed during Mass on the third Sunday of Lent, the Lord Jesus confronts this Samaritan woman with the truth about herself and the gift he has to offer her. It is a truth that offers hope, that offers salvation. It does not condemn, nor does it close the door on the possibility of conversion and the acceptance of the Lord's loving mercy.

The very same gift is offered to us during these extraordinary days of prayer, penance and preparation. Through attentive listening to the Word of God, through the devout reception of the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist, and through sharing with those who are in need, we have the opportunity to avail ourselves more fully of the loving mercy of God. In doing so, we encounter Christ, who shows us the face of God his Father and teaches us the truth about ourselves.

We humbly acknowledge that only in Christ do we find salvation and peace.

May the Lord bless your efforts to begin this holy season with devotion and fervor.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ **Cardinal Justin Rigali**

Cardinal Justin Rigali
Archbishop of Philadelphia

[Please communicate the contents of this letter to the faithful during the weekend of February 2-3, 2008.]