

Dear Lenten People,

Our journey to the Cross has begun. The Season of Lent is a marvelous opportunity for repentance, conversion and a chance to see God's many gifts all around us.

"How's your life going?" an individual asks you. "Well, so-so could be better." Or "Didn't get the promotion." Or "The kids are driving me crazy!" Or "People won't leave me alone so I can finish my talk on selfishness."

Are we so focused on what we don't have that we are blind to what we have been blessed with from the Lord? At the same time, we spend too much of our time worrying. We sometimes worry and fret because there is nothing to worry about at that moment! Max Lucado in his book, *Grace for the Moment*, says this about worry.

*Two words summarize Christ's opinion of worry: Irrelevant and irreverent.*

*"Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not." (Matthew 6:27 NLT).*

*Worry is irrelevant. It alters nothing. When was the last time you solved a problem by worrying about it? Imagine someone saying, "I got behind in my bills, so I resolved to worry my way out of debt. And, you know, it worked! A few sleepless nights, a day of hand wringing. I yelled at my kids and took some pills, and—glory to worry—money appeared on my desk."*

*It doesn't happen! Worry changes nothing. You don't add one day to your life or one bit of life to your day by worrying. Your anxiety earns you heartburn, nothing more . . .*

*Ninety-two percent of our worries are needless! Not only is worry irrelevant, doing nothing; worry is irreverent, distrusting God.*

Beside worrying too much and sometimes focusing on what we don't have in our lives our "rugged individualistic" attitude can get in the way of living life to the full. What do I mean? Some people have difficulty understanding the value of community. George Bernard Shaw once said, "I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can." And learn the lesson from Canada Geese . . . . .

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stay in formation with those people who are heading the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the flock and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. Always encourage those who have the courage to be out front.

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot, and falls out of the formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies; and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their own group. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

Remember—We need each other and the importance of gathering weekly around the Table of the Lord for strength on the journey. Worry less and pray more! Something worth thinking about this Lenten Season.

Flying with you,

Fr. Greg