

March 9, 2010

Dear Friend of St. Jude:

Greetings. During Lent last year, I wrote to you about how striking it was to see people visiting and praying at the St. Jude Shrine on Ash Wednesday as they chose to begin their Lenten journey in the company of our holy patron of hope. This year has been quite the same, and perhaps even more so since it is the 75th anniversary year of the Shrine. In this special year, we ponder more deeply how far we have come in carrying out our ministry of hope while at the same time we give thanks to God and St. Jude for our devotees, past and present, whose support has carried us thus far.

Just as Lent is an opportunity for the Shrine to reflect upon its mission, so it is a yearly opportunity for people of faith to, as one writer says, “reflect on how well we are living out our Baptismal commitment and whether our actions are in line with the Gospel message.” My brother Dominican Friar, Fr. Paul Scanlon, O.P., a former Provincial of our Province, observed at Mass on Ash Wednesday that, during Lent, we are like the grape vine in winter that he sees on his way to celebrate Mass in the Wine Country of Northern California. At this time of the year, he said, the vine is sadly dry and barren looking and you wonder how it could possibly come back to life. But below ground, hidden from the eye, activity is taking place; the vine is setting down new and deeper root and is being nourished by underground water, which together enable it to spring into new and abundant life in the summer.

Our Lenten disciplines of abstinence, fasting, self-denial, and so on, though apparently “hard,” are nonetheless nourishing to our souls. They are wonderful ways in which our Catholic tradition helps us root ourselves deeper in faith so that we may spring into new and abundant life in Christ at Easter.

Our Easter Novena will commence on April 3 and conclude on April 11. Although this will not be a “preached” Novena, nevertheless we will offer special prayers and devotions throughout the nine days. Your petitions and intentions will as usual be placed on the St. Jude altar and offered in the prayers and Masses of the Dominican Friars. Please use the petition slip in this letter to remember those you love at this beautiful time of year.

I pray that, through the intercession of St. Jude, you will walk like the Psalmist (Psalm 43) in the light and truth of Christ this Lent and arrive at Easter on the holy mountain, the place where He dwells.

Sincerely,



Fr. Martin Walsh, O.P.
Director

