

March 2009

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

A few days ago we began again the journey of Lent. As the impact of global recession hits home for us, Lent may reveal itself to us in new ways. The small privations or gestures we voluntarily undertook in better times to remind ourselves that Lent is a penitential season may have an edge now as we experience tighter budgets and the real fear of those around us concerning employment, housing, and simply making ends meet from one day to the next. The recent letter published by our General Assistant for Temporalities is a clear indication that the world situation has affected us Marianists significantly.

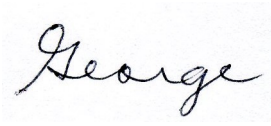
What does all this mean? And what are we praying for? Do we ask for the return of the old economy with its many delusions and inequities? Do we want the full restoration of former privileges and the pretense of invulnerability? Crisis has the power either to paralyze us with fear or to open our eyes to the common lot we share with everyone else. Difficult times either cause us to hunker down and protect our own interests or awaken us to the value and power of shared sacrifice and community as the only path to recovery that lifts up everyone.

Return to God is the call of Lent. This return to God is our path to recovery — economically and spiritually. But it is not the path to the way things were. The covenant that defines us also binds us to commit to a different kind of world — the beloved community God inspires us to be around the altar of sacrifice and the table of love we share in worship.

Attached to this e-mail is a list of feast days in March. I remind you of two special feasts we celebrate this month—the Feast of St. Joseph on March 19 and the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord on March 25. Both feasts call for special intentions at the Eucharist for those of us in the Society of Mary. Through the kindness of Brother John Samaha, there are several helpful resources for your reflection and use at prayer on the Feast of St. Joseph. These resources may be accessed on the [PORTAL](#) under “Liturgies” and then “Various other prayers.”

As we journey again through the holiest season of our faith, may Mary be a model for us of humble yet confident prayer. Joined with our almsgiving and fasting, may our prayer carry us on our Lenten journey!

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

George J. Cerniglia, S.M.
Assistant for Religious Life