

Dearest Brothers,

Blessed Peace of this season of Lent!

Lent, once again, is upon us. It is during this time of the year that the Lord Jesus invites us to journey with him to accomplish the Father's will by his suffering and death on the cross by which he redeems the world.

Our own motto as Clerics Regular Minor is "Ad majorem Resurgentis Gloriam." These words had been obviously carefully chosen by our Holy Founders. In Latin the word Resurgentis is a participle in the genitive case (pertaining to Christ) and signifying literally "rising." Thus, our motto richly illustrates the continuing salvific act of the Rising Christ, in bringing wayward humanity back to the Father, through our common apostolate of bringing about the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ wherever we are, in collaboration of God's people in our communities. And certainly, the Lenten season gives us the opportunity to pause and reflect, to be mindful of our own humanity, our own weaknesses, failures and sinfulness, in order to ask the Lord Jesus for forgiveness, healing and strength and to be able to receive his grace and mercy.

We give thanks to God for the Order's General Diet held from February 7 to 18 in Fraterna Domus, Sacrofano, Rome. The words of the theme of this year's General Diet, "A humble and contrite heart you will not spurn" (Psalm 50:19) can continue to guide us in our reflection this Lent in our own communities, keeping in mind not only our vow of humility but also the very example of our Holy Founders, St. Francis Caracciolo, Ven. Augustine Adorno and Fr. Fabrizio Caracciolo, who had desired to completely and closely follow the meek and humble of heart, our Lord Jesus Christ.



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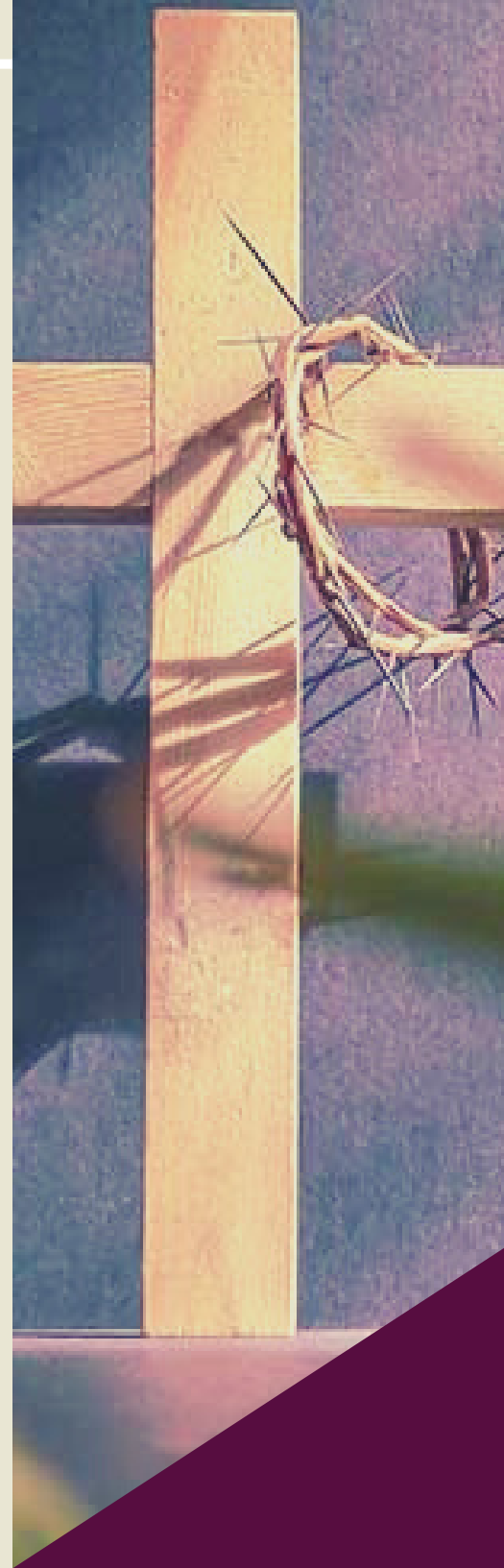
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Penance is one of the cornerstones of our spirituality as Clerics Regular Minor. In fact, in the Apostolic Brief *Sacrae Religionis* of Pope Sixtus V issued on July 1, 1588, which is the Church's definitive approval of the new religious Order, stated our holy founders' desire to live as a congregation of clerics so as to serve God for the salvation of souls and by the profession of the religious vows in order to be close to God more intimately and in humility and devotion to follow his commands and to practice continuous prayers, spiritual works and penance.

In our present CRM Constitutions, Chapter III titled "The Spiritual Life," Article 3 on Penance, number 61 states that as Clerics Regular Minor and followers of Saint Francis Caracciolo, we are to meditate often on the passion of Christ so that we could understand better and accept the Lord's invitation to be his follower who "must deny his very self, take up his cross each day and follow in my steps" (Luke 9:23). As Clerics Regular Minor, the practice of penance is our response to the Lord's call to conversion, to live no longer for ourselves but for others, to share in the sacrifice of Christ, to become persistent and faithful in our vocation, to overcome worldly temptations, to be able to accept with generosity the hardships and challenges in our labors "in a constant and peaceful engagement in community life, and in the spontaneous inner adherence to a simple and austere way of life" (CRM Constitutions no. 66). Perhaps we can ask ourselves what other creative ways we can perform circular acts of penance in our own communities, by which we can be in solidarity with the Universal Church in terms of reaching out to Jesus himself who is in disguise in the poor, the sick, the elderly, the prisoners, the poor migrants and all marginalized people.



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In the Holy Father's message for Lent this year 2022, Pope Francis writes that this period is an invitation for us "to conversion, to a change in mindset, so that life's truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness." Pope Francis invites us to reflect on the words of Saint Paul to the Galatians (6:9-10), "Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all." The Holy Father is emphatic as he tells us not to grow tired of doing good that includes continued and persevering practice of prayer, conversion and frequent reception of God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, thereby "uprooting evil in our lives," and not to grow tired of doing good and practicing charity towards others.

More than ever, due to the darkness of our times, and the ongoing war started by Russia, there is a need to intensify our practice of penance and prayer for peace and the conversion of the world. Pope Francis has invited us to fast for peace this Ash Wednesday March 2, and to turn towards our Heavenly Mother the Queen of Peace to "preserve the world from the madness of war." I recommend highly to pray the rosary daily and frequent our private adoration to pray for the victims of this mad war. We will be close to them in prayers and thoughts.

May St. Joseph, Our Lady the Queen of Peace, St. Michael the Archangel and our Holy Founders intercede for us, protect the people affected by the ongoing war and that may God answer our prayer to end this war in the Ukraine. Amen.

May I share with you the prayer for peace in our time, which you could share with your communities.

AMRG.



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A CHRISTIAN PRAYER FOR PEACE IN OUR TIME

O God, author and giver of peace,
in whose image and likeness each of us
has been created with a human dignity
worthy of respect on earth
and destined for eternal glory,
Listen to the cry that rises from every corner
of this fragile earth,
from our human family torn by violent conflict:

Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your son Jesus Christ told us
and as we have experienced in these days,
is a peace which the world cannot give.

To world leaders grant the wisdom
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion,
and nation to that common humanity that makes us
all your children and brothers and sisters to one
another.

To those who have taken up arms in anger or revenge
or even in the cause of justice
grant the grace of conversion to the path of peaceful
dialogue and constructive collaboration.

To the innocent who live in the shadow of war and
terror, especially the frightened children,
be a shelter and strength, their haven and hope.

And to those who have already lost their lives
as victims of human cruelty and chemical warfare,
open wide your arms and enfold them all
in the embrace of your compassion, healing, and
everlasting life.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord.
Mary, Mother of all and Queen of peace, pray for us.
- Peter J. Scagnelli

cf: <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/prayers-in-times-of-crisis/in-times-of-war-and-civil-unrest>



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