



**Instituto Calasancio**  
Hijas de la Divina Pastora



Madrid, February 17, 2021

**To the sisters and religious communities,  
To those who share the Calasancian Educational Mission  
Of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess,  
To those who feel attracted by the Calasancian Charism  
Of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess,  
Bequeathed by Saint Faustino Míguez de la Encarnación**

**J.R.E.N.C.**

This Ash Wednesday, we begin the Lenten journey, which leads us, as every year, to the joy of Easter.

A path of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, which Pope Francis in his message for this year invites us to live hand in hand with

- **FASTING**

He proposes it to us as a way of poverty and deprivation; as a reality that, lived with simplicity of heart, opens us "to discover anew the gift of God," the gift of his Love and his call to fraternity.

The fasting that God wants is the one that makes us poor with the poor. It is that which is oriented to love our neighbor, because "as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us, love is a movement outwards towards another, whereby we consider 'the beloved as somehow united to ourselves'" (cf. Encyclical Letter Fratelli tutti, 93).

Fasting is the possibility for each one of us to free ourselves from everything that enslaves us, that does not let us go out of ourselves and that makes us lose sight of the horizon of others.

And placing ourselves in that horizon, Lent is a propitious occasion to fast from "words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn".[208] (Encyclical Letter Fratelli tutti [FT], 223), Pope Francis tells us.

I invite you to look at this time as a gift from the Lord that disposes us to open ourselves to the gift of others, from the fasting of everything that centers us in ourselves and disconnects us from God and others. A gift that, welcomed by us, as

Calasanctian educators of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess, enables us to turn to God and to his passion, to his cause, which are the children and young people, the wounded, the needy, the hungry for dignity.

- **ALMSGIVING**

The Pope in his message defines it as "the look and gestures of love towards the wounded man".

In this time of grace we are encouraged to take care of our gaze, gestures and words so that through them we can be an encouragement, care and strength for others, people who generate and restore dignity where it has been mistreated or threatened (Encyclical Letter Fratelli tutti [FT], 223). We are called to be bearers of inclusive words that build, dignify, fraternize and create networks.

Lenten almsgiving is mediation that enables us to take a stand for kindness, to go out of ourselves to give a smile, to listen, to stimulate, to accompany. Only in this way will almsgiving be pleasing to God, because it will be an enabler of active and operative charity.

- **PRAYER**

Lent is a time to take care of the filial dialogue with the Father, knowing that we are beloved children on whom God the Father also pronounces his word: "You are my son, I have called you by name, you are mine. You are someone blessed, you are my beloved child". It is a time of grace to recover and savor, within ourselves, our belonging to God.

This liturgical season prepares us to receive God into our lives and allow him to "make his dwelling place in us" (cf. Jn 14:23), allowing ourselves to be reached each day by his Word, which challenges our lives.

Happy Lenten journey towards the Easter of Life.

Fraternal greetings to each one of you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Calderón', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sacramento Calderón  
Superior General