



BENET HILL MONASTERY

3190 Benet Lane * Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Monastic Lenten Journey

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Warming breezes, misty mornings, and tiny green tips of grass finding their way through fallen pine needles on the forest floor are sure signs that spring has come to the monastery. This marvelous season of new life whispers joy into each sister's heart as we begin our observance of the liturgical season of Lent. Lent is an Old English word which simply means spring. The Church uses the word *Lent* to designate a time, a season, intentionally set aside for the faithful to refocus our attention on what brings vitality to our relationship with God.

Lent begins in the monastery as it does for all of the Church on Ash Wednesday. Gathering as a community, with family and friends we are marked with ashes signifying our mortality and repentance for our sinfulness. In our chapel and oratory, deep purples replace the vibrant greens of ordinary time. The monastery is cleared of the excesses of our lives. We, like Jesus enter into the desert or wilderness of quiet and solitude to regain our sense of what is really important.

The first Sunday of Lent begins the period of Purification and Enlightenment for all who will enter the Church by receiving the sacraments of initiation at Easter. We offer our prayer and support for these people in the Diocese of Colorado Springs and in the places where our sisters minister by reading their names aloud during Mass then, by placing a beautifully framed list of their names in a special place in our chapel.

This year, the word of God is particularly potent as we spend time with the Gospel of John and three powerful stories: Jesus' meeting with the woman at Jacob's Well, Jesus heals the man born blind and the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Praying with these scripture stories we have a new opportunity to be aware of our own limitations and to encounter Jesus in new ways.

Lent in the monastery is a time of joy. St. Benedict reminds us the purpose of Lent is that it leads to Easter and he encourages us during Lent to keep our manner of life most pure so that we may "look forward to Easter with joy and spiritual longing". Just as the breezes blow through the pines to clear out unnecessary debris so the Holy Spirit blows through our Lenten observances clearing the way for grace and gratitude as we open ourselves once again to Easter's unexpected newness of life in Christ.