



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Lent 2017

Dear Friends:

Lent 2017 is a time for us to pray for *dramatic missionary growth* in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Part of that dramatic missionary growth is stimulated by our willingness to invite our inactive Catholic friends back to Mass.

I put it this way in my Installation Mass homily on January 31: *I appeal on this day of my Installation as the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre to every inactive Catholic in the Diocese to come back to the power of the Word of God, the power of the Sacrament of Penance, and the power of the Catholic Mass.*

*I am so very sorry if you have been hurt or disappointed by the Church in any way and we stand here today to support you, to love you and to listen to you.*

*In turn, I am asking every active Catholic of every age in the Diocese of Rockville Centre between January 31<sup>st</sup> and Ash Wednesday (which is March 1, 2017) to invite one inactive Catholic friend or family to come with you to Mass and to gently, humbly, compassionately, non-judgmentally witness to the beauty of your intimacy with Christ and your love for the mission of the Catholic Church and how it has enriched and inspired your life.*

*The power of these gentle and compassionate invitations is enormous. They always plant a seed of grace. And now's the time to make these invitations. Let's all do it together and realize that it is the kindest thing any of us could do for anyone.*

For those who have made those invitations since January 31<sup>st</sup>, thank you! For those of us who need an extension, let's give ourselves till Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017 to make that compassionate invitation to our friends. And let's open ourselves to making these invitations more frequently and consistently.

When we die, we will all look lovingly into the merciful eyes of Jesus and review our life with him. The people whom we have helped to invite back to Mass and their Catholic faith will be standing around us with radiant smiles. And we want a big crowd!

We connect our Lenten 2017 prayer, fasting and almsgiving together to this intention and to our constant intention to pray for our brothers and sisters who are poor, hungry, suffering from war, violence or persecution in our world.

You and your families are all daily in my prayers and Masses. Thank you for your witness of "holiness and mission" to the world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Bishop of Rockville Centre