

Newsletter Lent & Easter 2011

Across the Rector's Desk

I love to do crossword puzzles; they're a way to exercise my mind and relax. Some times I can get all the clues and some times I spend a week working on the Globe and Mail Saturday and the Toronto Star Sunday puzzles. There was one clue that had me stumped: "Fast time" which I ruminated over, thinking about daylight saving time and other ways of meaning the hours of the clock. Finally it clicked: Lent!

Lent takes its name from the lengthening hours of sunlight as the earth tilts toward the sun. I wonder how the original meaning of the word relates for the folks "down under" where the daylight hours are actually becoming shorter. Lent marks the time of the Church year when we follow Jesus' journey to the Cross in the Sunday readings leading up to Easter. Along the way we watch as many of Jesus' followers desert him as his way seems too difficult and eventually all but his mother and the beloved disciple abandon him.

Lenten discipline encourages us to symbolically follow the hard road to Gethsemane remembering that we too have at times abandoned him. Traditionally this has been done in almsgiving, fasting and meditation. In the Ash Wednesday liturgy we are exhorted to take on a discipline. We have a great difficulty with self-denial and sacrifice and yet that is the meaning of taking up your cross. Lenten fasting has become trite in our culture, if people think about it at all. The question becomes "what are you giving up for Lent?" not what are you doing to model yourself more closely on Christ. I suggest reframing discipline in a positive way and perhaps we can overcome our resistance.

Decide to spend time quietly meditating on the Sunday lessons, read them over, listen for a word or phrase that jumps out at you then turn it over in your mind several times. This will help you put yourself in God's space. Use the "Living Lent at home" Sunday handout so that even if you don't come to the Wednesday study group you can be participating in the parish Lenten framework.

Consider how fortunate we are to live in Canada in comfort. Decide to give to PWRDF what you would spend on treats for yourself: coffee at Tim's or Starbuck's, a meal in a restaurant, the beverage before dinner. Whatever it is that you enjoy. Reflect on need versus want. Is it possible that our wealth keeps others poor?

And then give your body a rest from food if your health allows it. Put yourself in the place of those who have no food and walk with them as Jesus walks with them. Fast for one day a week or one meal a week or if your health doesn't permit fasting consider eating very plain and simple food.

As we experience Lent, the disciplines we begin to practice for 40 days (Sunday is not a fast day) may become habits that will bring us closer to God throughout the year.

Office hours are Tuesday – Friday, 9:30am - 12:30. Please drop by or if you wish make an appointment for any convenient time. If you or someone you know is ill or in hospital, please let me know. The Parish office # is 416-244-9211 or in an emergency you may call 416-226-2486.