

February 29, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

LOOKING THROUGH

By Julie Mussché

From the Book of Joel

“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

JOEL 2:12-13

Reflection

Returning briefly back to the trek across the Sahara, in past reflections I might have mentioned that the 1958 Bedford truck, our transport for many weeks, broke down a number of times. One such instance was in Niger toward the end of our journey. As such, our supplies, food and water, were running low.

Several of our traveling party had to hitch a ride to find parts to repair the truck

and the remaining group was unsure of when they might return.

It was amazing how quickly our group fell into near panic at the prospect of limited provisions. The group split into two factions, the rationers and the pilferers. The rationers, to whom I belonged, inventoried food and water in the event we needed to start rationing supplies. A definite paucity perspective with this group. The pilferers surreptitiously started lifting bottles of potable water, candy, freeze dried rations and Vegemite until the rationers discovered what was going on. After a bit of a dust-up, both factions settled into a period of waiting and modestly using our larder. Eventually, the truck was repaired and we made our way to our departure destination and civilization. Looking back, how quickly societal norms and considerate behavior deteriorated when our group was confronted with scarcity and basic survival.

As Christians during Lent, when we fast, we symbolically put our lives on the line, there is struggle and perhaps some suffering with hunger or doing without. We become imitators of Christ. There is perhaps another dimension of fasting to be considered beyond the penitential, sacrificial, cleansing, or preparatory intentions. Maybe it is also a soulful reminder of the life-sustaining gifts of creation, food and water, and those that struggle to meet basic needs, those who are hungry or thirst. That brings us to tomorrow's reflection. Until then, God bless you.



Sahara
Photo by Julie Muss ché

For Pondering

- How is fasting significant to your faith tradition and spiritual practice?
 - What seasons, days of the week, and holidays does your tradition engage in fasting?
 - What have been the spiritual fruits of fasting that you have harvested?
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For Prayer

*Generous Creator, sustainer of life,
I am grateful for the food and drink I receive from you.
In times of fasting, rend my heart to be open to you,
help me to gain strength in the sacrifice,
and to remember those who must fast without choice.
Amen.*

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