

February 22, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH LENT

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A SEASON FOR HUMILITY

Ash Wednesday

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Excerpt from Today's Reading

*Even now, says the LORD,
turn to me with your whole heart,
with fasting, and weeping, and mourning;
Rend your hearts, not your garments,
and return to the LORD, your God.
For gracious and merciful is he,
slow to anger, rich in kindness,
and relenting in punishment."*

JOEL 2:12-13

Reflection

Welcome to Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent's 40-day journey leading to Holy Week and Easter, the climax of faith. Lent is a penitential season. Lent calls me to humility, an honest self-assessment in the full realization that God's love is unconditional, all-inclusive, and permeates the totality of my life. Lent is a season to pause from the busyness of daily life and consciously choose to reflect on the landscape of my soul. Lent is a springtime renewal of life to deepen and focus my relationship with God -- All by God's grace!

The journey of Lent encourages personal disciplines of **prayer**, **fasting**, and **almsgiving**. Rather than engaging these disciplines in a familiar pattern of giving up something, I sense that I am invited to reflect on the stuff of my everyday life allowing the light of God's love to shine on my inner reality.

I bring the bread of my life shared with others and ask for the grace to **pray**, **fast**, and **give** of myself freely without condition. For example, I **pray** to recognize the hindrances of my own making that prevent mutuality in relating to others. I **fast** from negative thinking and judgements, so to give the other the benefit of the doubt. **Almsgiving** is done in the manner I give myself, patiently remaining in the conversation with the other even in conflictual situations, especially when I would prefer to run away.

These disciplines ground me in a humble reliance on grace that draws me into God and the ways of God. I am not my own agent; rather I rely on God and the gentle strength of abiding presence. Honest self-assessment reveals both error and gift of my ways. Humility is truth that keeps me from pride, arrogance, or cowardice. Honest reflection, on my biases, attitudes, intentions, and actions, opens me to the insight from God and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Lenten humility reveals the blessing of inspired insight offering a way to live by God's abiding strength and desire for me. This is at once gratifying and humbling. Centered in God's way of loving, I seek to serve, to live, to love as Jesus did. In turning to God with my whole heart, I can better receive and give of myself in humble zeal, stirring up love and drawing all people to God and one another.



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For Pondering

- In the light of God's love for me, what are the attitudes and biases that conflict with God's way of loving in my relationships?
- What is God asking of me this Lent?
- How do I choose to engage the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Lent?

For Prayer

May I be converted to love every day. May this Lent be an opportunity to change all my attitudes, way of being, and doing in concert with the out-pouring of God's love. Please, God, inspire in me a change of heart so that all my potential shifts, into selfless gifts for the other person. Then, I hope that I will be changed from within and through me God's kingdom will break into the world.

Adapted from *Rule for a New Brother*

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