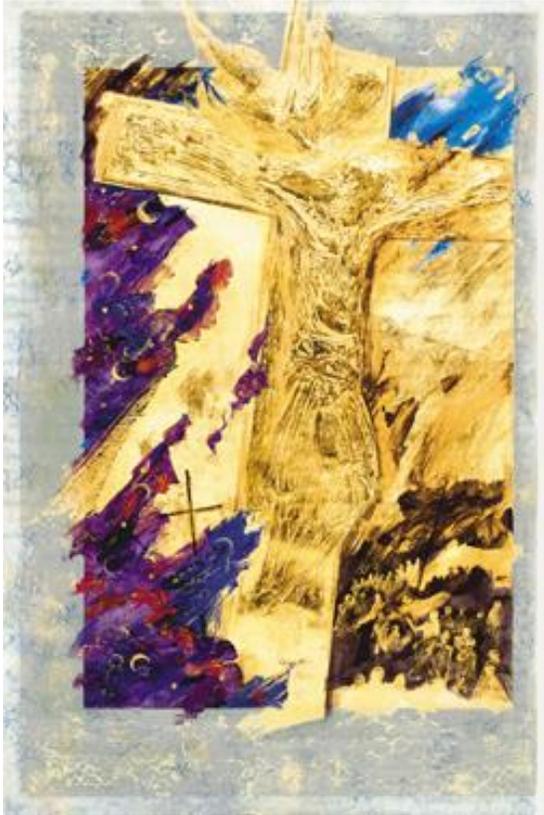


Lenten Reflections

March 8, 2019



"If Lent is springtime then our fast must lead us to bring life to others" (2017)

The Church recognizes the season of Lent as 'this time'; but a time that should be accompanied with acts of charity, love and goodness. Fasting from food is acceptable to God only when we refrain from being unkind, blaming others, lack of empathy, self-fulfillment only, entitlement and blindness to all our true blessings that surround us (I fall victim to this). The powerful statement on fasting about food (or things) is for me more metaphorical and more about our actions of charity. By fasting we are reminded of our commitment to God and His word, and to refrain from our acts of intolerance, lack of empathy and refraining from compassion, love and devotion to God. Because fasting to please God is not the goal, the fast is about understanding real sacrifice through recognizing how it will impact others in our decisions, our love and our empathy of others and their day to day lives.

There are few rewards more virtuous than the one of true sacrifice of the things we desire and to give that time, energy and love to others. It must not be just symbolic, yet tangible and real through our virtuous acts.

***This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:
releasing those bound unjustly,
untying the thongs of the yoke;
Setting free the oppressed,
breaking every yoke;
Sharing your bread with the hungry,
sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;
Clothing the naked when you see them,
and not turning your back on your own.***

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Friday after Ash Wednesday

Lectionary: 221

Reading 1 [IS 58:1-9A](#)

Thus says the Lord GOD:

Cry out full-throated and unsparingly,
lift up your voice like a trumpet blast;
Tell my people their wickedness,
and the house of Jacob their sins.
They seek me day after day,
and desire to know my ways,
Like a nation that has done what is just
and not abandoned the law of their God;
They ask me to declare what is due them,
pleased to gain access to God.
"Why do we fast, and you do not see it?
afflict ourselves, and you take no note of it?"

Lo, on your fast day you carry out your own pursuits,
and drive all your laborers.
Yes, your fast ends in quarreling and fighting,
striking with wicked claw.
Would that today you might fast
so as to make your voice heard on high!
Is this the manner of fasting I wish,
of keeping a day of penance:
That a man bow his head like a reed
and lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Do you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?
This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:
releasing those bound unjustly,
untying the thongs of the yoke;
Setting free the oppressed,
breaking every yoke;
Sharing your bread with the hungry,
sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;
Clothing the naked when you see them,
and not turning your back on your own.
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your wound shall quickly be healed;
Your vindication shall go before you,
and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer,
you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!

Responsorial Psalm [PS 51:3-4, 5-6AB, 18-19](#)

R. (19b) A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

R. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

For I acknowledge my offense,
and my sin is before me always:
"Against you only have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight."

R. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;
should I offer a burnt offering, you would not accept it.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

R. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

Verse Before The Gospel [SEE AM 5:14](#)

Seek good and not evil so that you may live,
and the Lord will be with you.

Gospel [MT 9:14-15](#)

The disciples of John approached Jesus and said,
"Why do we and the Pharisees fast much,
but your disciples do not fast?"
Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests mourn
as long as the bridegroom is with them?
The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them,
and then they will fast."