

Lent 2015

Dear Friends,

As I sit at my desk writing this, it is Ash Wednesday, the first day of the liturgical season called Lent which leads up to Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

There are many traditions associated with Lent; the best known perhaps being the idea of giving something up. This originated in the Roman Catholic tradition but has spread to other traditions, including to some people in our own. The idea behind this is that by giving up something, a favourite food or activity perhaps, we are identifying ourselves with Christ and His sacrifices leading up to the greatest one of all, His death on the cross. While the intent behind this is good though, I have a sneaking suspicion that for many people today, the whole idea of giving up something for Lent has become a bit of a joke; something along the line of New Year's resolutions. The intent may be there but ... how many people take it seriously and actually accomplish their goal?

As I was thinking about this, it occurred to me; why do we give up something for Lent? This is to say, why do we make it a "negative"? Perhaps it would be better if we made it "positive" and do something for Lent instead. Instead of giving up a favourite activity, perhaps we could engage in one that we normally wouldn't, such as spending more time in prayer, reading our Bible, or consciously trying to do one good deed for another every day. Instead of giving up a favourite food, candy or desserts, we could make a conscious effort, through the giving of our time or money, to help out an organization dedicated to feeding and helping others. The possibilities are endless.

In the end though, perhaps it doesn't really matter whether we give up something or do something extra for Lent; what matters is that we take the time and make the time, if need be, to remember what this time of year is all about. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. God sent His son into the world, not to condemn the world but rather to save the world through Him".

Wishing you a most blessed Lent and Easter,

Shawn