

Sunday Reflection

- ◆ **First Reading:** *Genesis 9:8-15*
- ◆ **Second Reading:** *1 Peter 3:18-22*
- ◆ **Gospel:** *Mark 1:12-15*

A few days ago we started into the season of Lent ; “LENT” comes from an old Anglo Saxon word “lencten” which means “springtime” .

At this time of the year in the northern hemisphere, we are witnessing a gentle and gradual rebirth and reawakening of the world of nature around us ; soon we will see new life stirring in the trees and shrubs, plants sprouting new shoots, seeds beginning to germinate beneath the earth, and longer daylight hours. New life is on the way, Mother Nature is wonderful to behold ; Nature has a way of speaking to the human heart, we may look out and observe, then to ask ourselves AND WHAT ABOUT RENEWAL IN MY OWN LIFE? of course each of us has a different way of responding to that question. Would “renewal in my own life” mean some sort of spring cleaning?, or the possibility of a new job or maybe move to another area or something else?????????.....

For us believers, the RENEWAL takes place from within, very similar to the flow of marriage, parenthood, friendship, priesthood, teaching, from keeping your kitchen clean to servicing a bus, all things must be constantly renewed, because if they are not, then what happens? the kitchen becomes grotty, the marriage becomes a strain, parenting becomes an annoyance, the friendship slips into oblivion, the priest becomes cranky and unapproachable, the teacher becomes more agitated with the pupils, and the bus breaks down ; exactly the same can happen in our Faith ; we may think that our-flow-of-Faith is moving along as it should, but is it?

There is such a thing as “saying the same ‘ol prayers, going to the same ‘ol Mass, confess the same ‘ol sins to the same ‘ol priest, getting the same ‘ol penance followed by the same ‘ol absolution”, as in, my Faith/ religion has become mere routine, call it “adoration of my Routine God” ; you may well ask “...AND IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT?”, it’s not so much “wrong”, rather the flow of Faith is only doing a rendezvous, not really going anywhere, static! So what’s so special about LENT? Well! it’s a special time apart for all of us, only 40 days, even people of no fixed belief use this time of Lent as a time to evaluate their lives, there is a saying “THE UNREFLECTED LIFE IS NO LIFE AT ALL” ;

As believers, what would be a good starting point to get us into the “SKIN-OF-LENT”, taking into account this last year, the Pandemic and all its’ problematic consequences ; needless to say it’s been vastly difficult and still is for millions the world over, and yet we are seeing a great out-pour of generosity and compassion for those who are struggling, we humans also have no limitations to what we can express in kindness, the animals would be proud of us.....

But getting back to that starting point for Lent, I have here an interesting quote from archbishop Van Thuan, taken from his book “the Road of Hope” he says “DO NOT CONFUSE THE WORK OF GOD WITH GOD HIMSELF. THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN THE LORD WILL WANT YOU TO CHOOSE HIM FIRST AND TO LEAVE THE WORK IN HIS HANDS” ; this has a great message as we settle into the season of Lent ; with so much uncertainty and anxiety everywhere in our present virus circumstances, we need to simply LISTEN to what the Lord God has to say to you, to me, to all of us, not so much to be DOING-FOR-THE-LORD, rather to BEING-THERE-FOR-THE-LORD, PUT HIM FIRST, and to LISTEN ; would this not be a good start into Lent, as in, LISTEN FIRST, then DO? ; just like Our Lord and his 40 days in the desert ; He went out to LISTEN to the Spirit before entering into his public active ministry ;

Perhaps you already have your own spiritual plans for Lent, well 'n good! Our need to stop, reflect and grow in the Lord is constant ; As already mentioned, Faith must never remain static with a “no-growth” tag on it ; As a 2nd suggestion on the same topic, why not incorporate into your Lenten plan the great words of st.John the Baptist? Having seen the Messiah and believed, John turned to his own disciples and exclaimed HE MUST INCREASE, I MUST DECREASE

Or to give these words a modern slant MAY ALL MY PRESENT INTERESTS (well!, most of them!!...), WORRIES and WOES DIMINISH

SO THAT I CAN GIVE GREATER PRIORITY TO THE PROMPTINGS OF THE SPIRIT

.....stay healthy, pray for the homeless and the broken hearted...

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