

## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

What is the Lord asking us to do this Lent? Now you might have plans of giving up things, which is not a bad idea, however, I would like to challenge you to go deeper. As we enter into the Lenten period, we might look at what is humanly possible. What could I achieve during Lent? I would like us all to think of what is divinely possible instead. Let us review the readings: be Holy for I am Holy; do not resist an evil doer; if someone strikes you on the right cheek, offer them your left: if someone commands you to carry their burden for one mile, offer to carry it the second mile; love your enemy and do good to those who hurt you. And then - be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Is what you are doing for Lent going to help you to live like that, to be able to follow those commands? If not, then you and I better revamp our Lenten plans. Can anyone here be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect or be holy as the Lord your God is Holy? The answer is yes, we all can. We are not called to look perfect, that is a woundedness in our soul, we are called to be perfect. I think we should be asking, "Okay, Lord, what can I do this Lent that will help me to follow the radical commands of the Gospel?"

I mentioned it was possible to be holy and be perfect, that is true. Why do we know that? Because God commanded it. But we cannot do it without His strength. At the end of this Lent we should not desire to say, "Lord, look what I did." We should desire to say, "Look what the Lord did in my life. He perfected me. He made me more able to live the wild and impossible commands of the Gospel. That is a Lent where you and I go through the desert of our self-reliance and let God work on our souls.

I am proposing some things to let God work on our souls this Lent. The first is dedicate yourself to some prayer program this Lent. I will give you some examples in a handout or in the bulletin. Then I want you all to get a journal and ask God each morning: *Lord, show how much you love me today.* Second petition: *Lord, what do you want to teach me today?* Third petition: *Lord, how do you want to heal me today?* Make those petitions in the morning and in the evening or throughout the day write down those things that come up. Some ways you can tell God is trying to heal you are ways that you are reactive. Take those to God. Do not look for the answer, let God bring it to you. You can ask Him, "Lord, what is the root of the reactivity or the wound that makes me anger so easily?" Our souls are like our body. If we are hurt, we protect our wounds and if people touch those wounds, we react because they hurt. So, when someone touches an open wound we might inadvertently slap them as a defense mechanism. Our souls are like that, too. I, one time, had a doctor roughly clean out an infection. I didn't hit him but I knew when he was touching my wound. Know that when you pray God is going to touch your wounds so, first of all, that you are aware they are there and, secondly, so you can bring them to Him to heal them. You don't have to know how God is going to heal them and you don't have to figure out how He is going to heal them. It is enough to bring it to God. Just like when you go to the doctor you most likely do not know what he or she is going to prescribe, but you trust the doctor knows what he or she is doing.

Write these things down and present them to God. In each parish we are going to have a night each week for Lenten sharing and healing. If you want to come and share or be prayed over this would be a good time. You will only have to share what you feel comfortable sharing. If you need more guidance you can schedule a time for spiritual direction.

Let us make this the Lent where we praise God in the end for the great victory and healing and love He has presented in our lives.