

“Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” This simple message we will hear Ash Wednesday is what the Lenten season calls us to. We are to give ourselves ever more to Christ.

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This is of course harder than it sounds. In Lent though we try to remember the grace with which Christ has bestowed on us. It is a grace which allows us to overcome sin and grow in love. We can be reminded that we are not alone because Christ's presence through the Holy Spirit is as present today as it was when it came down upon the apostles. This grace allows us to look at the world through God's eyes, seeing the disease sin has inflicted and the need for God's healing and love. When we turn away from sin, the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts and we come back to God, to whom we belong. The grasps of sin fall in response to the call of Christ.

In Lent, the hope is to respond ever deeper to this call and amend our life in needed ways so as to become the men Jesus needs us to be. Come ever closer to Him and it will be revealed not only what we need to do but why we need to do it. In his recent Lenten message, Pope Francis reminds us of the poverty which Jesus undertook. He writes that “Christ's poverty which enriches us is his taking flesh and bearing our weaknesses and sins as an expression of God's infinite mercy to us.” Jesus humbled himself for our sake. He entered into solidarity with people, coming to them no matter their state in life, as someone just like them. Though Jesus was poor he was rich because of his relationship with God. Through his poverty, we see that we don't really need anything so much as we need God.

Pope Francis reminds us of the significance in living Christ's poverty today for the sake of evangelization. Our mistake can be separating this from our life by thinking that we, the Holy Father says, “can save the world with the right kind of human resources.” The world really needs people who honestly care and who come to them, those who recognize everyone as brothers and sisters in Christ. The truth, as he says, is “God continues to save mankind and the world through the poverty of Christ.” This poverty needs to be understood. It is coming to people as Jesus did with nothing but the grace God gives you and which you can give too. It is a poverty that reflects solidarity with everyone, a charity which evangelizes. It has its reliance on God in all things, giving ourselves ever more to Him. We see others as our brothers and sisters in Christ and we see their needs as our needs. Through this, the Good News must become the renewed Good News by our everyday efforts to proclaim it in word and deed.

While Lent is a time to reflect and repent, it is also a time to rejoice and believe. Jesus is the light in the darkness, and over our life we can find ourselves growing ever more in love for Him. The Lord gently says to everyone “Come follow me” (Mk 1:17). The first step is coming to Him and then finding the courage and trust in Him to keep going. Try to immerse yourself in the Gospel this Lent and think of all the events that took place. What happened back then? How does this affect life as we know it today? We can recognize that the passion, death and resurrection of

Jesus those centuries ago as if it happened yesterday. The faith is just as alive and the world has not forgotten the life and message of Jesus Christ.

This Lent, let us ask ourselves what Jesus's message means to each of us? How does it affect my life every day and where is it leading me? If we take the time necessary and seek to integrate the Gospel message into our daily lives, the true joy and meaning of the Good News can be ever clearer. Jesus offers a hope that everyone needs to know. He was the light that revealed himself in the darkness. In a world marred by sin, the greatest joy can be knowing that we are rescued, and that we in turn can take part in rescuing others.

We should always remember that God's love is deeper than we can know but so present in his Son Jesus. For "God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).