

## The beauty behind the season of Lent

It is truly a blessing to be a Catholic. One of the gifts the church offers us is the gift of the season of Lent. I know it sounds ironic that I regard a time of sorrow and mourning as a gift, but there are a lot of positives that can be acquired from this season.

The journey of Christianity is not an easy one. As the Holy Bible says, *“For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few”* (Mt 7:14). A lot of us find ourselves departing from our journey, the journey which God has placed before us. We often find ourselves relying on our own strength and less on the power and will of God. Unlike Solomon, we believe that we are wiser than He who has created us and disregard the wisdom he renders to us. We get weary of doing good because we feel that God cannot see our good deeds, but Gal 6:9 reminds us to continue doing good for in due season we will bear the fruits. Fortunately for us our God is a loving and merciful God. He is a God of second chances, of *seventy times seven* chances (Mt 18:22). In this beautiful and solemn season of Lent we are reminded to *“Rend [our] hearts, not [our] garments and return to the Lord, [our] God.”* (Joel 2:13).

We live in an addictive world. We all have our daily dosages of drugs that we take. My drugs may not be similar to yours; our drugs are different. You may be addicted to pharmaceutical drugs, social media which is an addiction common amongst us youth or a certain type of food or drink. Regardless of what your addiction may be, this season reminds us that we can conquer anything through God who gives us strength. I was once told that we should rather be addicted to *PRAYER*.

In Mt 6:7-15 Jesus said that when we pray we should not find ourselves saying a lot of words; prayer is saying a few simple words like thank you God, please God, praise God, etc. Lent teaches us that we are way above sin and that we were created for the greater glory of God. Also, one of the lessons we indirectly learn during this time is commitment and will power. We often shy away from having commitments because we don't believe that we will be able to see it through due to our busy lives. Here we are given a chance to realise our addictions and commit to living without them. And I believe if you can spend forty days without something – it is clearly not a need.

The church also instructs us that during lent we should not forget to use the sacrament of Confession. We are all sinners before God and sin is baggage. The forty day journey of Lent is easier taken when we carry less baggage. We need to also give ourselves time to listen to God. This is the season of silence. Remember, silence can be both figurative and literal. It is easier to listen to God when you are not in the midst of the chaos which the world gives. Some time alone is necessary.

An important value of Lent is alms giving, because we all know that faith without deeds is dead (James 2:17). In this time we need to revisit our Corporal Works of Mercy and at least try to put them into practise.

See, Lent is not a sad time after all. We have a lot to gain from it, be it spiritually or physically. This is the season of growth and deepening of our faith and rekindling of our commitment to God. May what remains of your Lenten journey be blessed.

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