

LENTEN SEASON

Journeying with the Lord

Starting with Ash Wednesday we had been united with the Lord in spirit through our prayer, fasting and penance, keeping up the traditional forty days of Lenten Observance. Let us keep in mind the Biblical significance of the special commitment of '40 days of prayer and penance'.



- **God created man in His own image and likeness (Gen 1.27)** to enjoy the Divine Life in fellowship with Him, which he lost due to sin of selfishness and disobedience. **The growing sin of mankind 'grieved Him to His heart' (cfr Gen 6.5, 6)**. But in Noah who was walking with God, **He found a man blameless and righteous (6.9)**. And through his loyalty and obedience, the Just God did an act of purification and elimination of the wicked with a flood for 40 days.
- The Law was given to Moses after his forty days of fasting and penance at Mount Sinai.
- During the forty years of journey through the desert, Israelites experienced God's caring love and protection; they were set free from the Egyptians and at the end they could enter into the Promised Land.
- Samuel's and David's reign of 40 years was significant; the Israelites were brought to unity and the kingdom was established for them.
- Prophet Elijah journeyed forty days to reach Mt. Horeb to have a deep encounter with God.
- Prophet Jonah asked people of Nineveh to pray, fast and do penance for 40 days to repent and to seek God's mercy.
- Jesus, after His Baptism was led by the Holy Spirit to a

desert where He fasted and prayed for 40 days before confronting the Devil and entering into His Public Ministry.

Now we are journeying with the Lord in the Holy Week, started with the Palm Sunday commemorating the triumphant Entry of Jesus to Jerusalem to complete His work as our Messiah- to suffer, to die and to rise again. The Holy Week is the most significant week of the year. Let us spend each day of the week reflecting deeply on the Gospel messages which tell about the salvific mission of our Lord. We can experience that the Divine Word is so rich and new each time we reflect on it as it is the Holy Spirit, the Author of the Divine Word who illumines our mind and heart shedding His light into our being.

Just note a contrast between the disciples of Jesus and the Pharisees in the Gospel narrative of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Lk 19. 37-39). **"The whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen" (37).** –**"Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop" (39).**

The disciples were those who were with Jesus, who have heard Him, seen His mighty works....In short they had experienced the Lord. And hence praising God was just spontaneous for them. Whereas the Pharisees were not with the Lord. They were 'at a distance', trying to judge and criticize His words and deeds. They could not experience Jesus and it was 'foreign for them' to praise Him.

Do I personally experience the wonderful, caring love of the Lord through my prayer life, reading and meditation of the Scripture, through my Sacramental life...Or do I find it difficult to 'befriend' Jesus in my day to day journey with Him? Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us come out of our 'hurdles' and be one with the Lord.

“Lord Holy Spirit, give me the humility to acknowledge that there is some of the Pharisee in me. Help me Lord Jesus Christ, to throw it at your feet and become your true disciple through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. At the confessional you are waiting to embrace me and make me a new person. You are my healer, strength and salvation. I thank and praise you all the days of my life.”



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