

Lenten People

... O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!"
(Psalm 95:6)

Well, we are halfway through **Lent ~ 2011**. We started this journey just three weeks ago. Perhaps you have **given up** something, **taken on** some kind task or two, or possibly done **a bit of both**. Maybe you have been **very intentional** about this season. Or maybe you have **just waited** to find **whatever life or God would placed in your path**. All of these **exercises** can be **good** and **important** ways to follow Christ.

But I think that "all of the above" just completes the first half of this journey. As important as all these choices and actions maybe, they are outside of us. Once we remind ourselves to **do differently** we are challenged **to be different people – inside**. *I think that the second half of Lent wants to shape us into **Lenten People!***

I recently heard a person say **"I am an Advent Person."** She went on to tell of how Christmas was her favorite time of the church year. Following that logic I could suggest that there are **Lenten People, Easter People and Pentecost People and Holy Week People** and maybe a lot of just **Ordinary Time People**.

Perhaps, something inside each of us is drawn to the **message, values, images** of one of these seasons. Some **hope, longing, joy, pain, sorrow, or victory** pulls us to the message of these seasons.

St. Augustine (354-430) has suggested that all of us have a **God-shaped-hole** within us. In the opening of his *Confessions* he said, *"thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee."*

The 'Stuff' Approach: Human beings try to fill this restless longing with all kinds of **"stuff."** *Possessions, money, toys, pleasure, money, work, alcohol, sex, money, drugs, addictions, ... and money.* None of this 'Stuff' works. **We are made for God.** *Our souls just do not accept substitutes.*

As **uncomfortable** as this **restlessness** may feel at times, the **yearning of our hearts and souls** is an **awareness** that can **lead the way** for us on the Lenten Journey.

So are you a **Lenten Person, an Easter Person, a Pentecost Person, a Holy Week Person** or maybe an **Ordinary Time Person?** Perhaps in some ways, we each may be all of these kinds of people. Does **something** in each season **interest** you?

Does it invite, charm, draw, appeal, or entice you:

- *to worship and bow down,*
- *to kneel before the LORD, our God, our Maker!*
- *to be the people of God*
- *to listen to God's voice!"*

Because we are made for God, we find **our rest** from **restlessness** by becoming **spiritual beings**. **Life** is a **spiritual quest each day**. **Lent just helps us** do this more intentionally. Remember Lent is about **LIFE with God, each day,** and things that last forever.

*Below is prayer to take with you on the second half of the journey. It comes from **Thomas Merton** (1915-1968) a modern Trappist monk, and something of a modern Augustine. I hope it helps you find the **voice of God** that you can listen to in Lent.*

Brave Journey,

Dan Leininger
Visitation Pastor

A Prayer from Thomas Merton

"MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think
I am following your will does not mean
that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything
apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me
by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore I will trust you always
though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me
to face my perils alone."

Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, Part Two, Chapter II.