

Lent is a Time of Reconciliation and Grace

Theological Reflection March 2017
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“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” (Mt 3 : 2-3)

The question of - « **Hey man where are you up to?** » remains unanswered for ages. Man trying to find meaning for his life through various means and activities remains to be answered. The efforts put in by everyone, individually and collectively to find an answer does not really explain the end of it. In some actions we achieve success and in some utter failure. But the search continues in the human history.

The Creator was happy for his creation and especially for the humans, who are created in his image and likeness. Though Sin brought a block between HIM and his creation, in his mercy he planned the redemption through the Salvation history. Mankind was prepared to be delivered from the bondage of sin. HIS revelation through various people and his intervention in the human history lasted for some centuries. In apt time, He sent his own SON among us in the human form. The whole salvation history foretold came alive in the person of Jesus, who bore all the sins of mankind on himself and assured us the salvation.

Why then, sin seems to take upper hand today?

It's because, the only thing that God has no control over us is our human Freedom. We are totally free to choose between good and bad, truth and falsehood, life and death, with the God given knowledge and wisdom. It seems a paradox but it's true. It seems really precarious to find humans questioning God and his existence.

On one side, we feel that we are beyond any control. But the misery of mankind continues and all those who deny the existence of God have no answer to it. On the other side, the so called believers fight in the name of God and kill each other. It makes no sense. We have no answer to the natural calamities. We have no limit for our greediness and consumerism. We have become indifferent to the cries of the poor and suffering.

Yet we are given a time to ponder on these things and correct ourselves. **The believers of all the religions have a special time every year, to have a scrutiny of life and examine the conscience;** the way we have lived and its results, so that as human we can put our life on the right path. Christians have Lent, Muslims have Ramadan, Hindus have Pithrpaksha, and all the religions have their own way of looking at life critically to set it right.

What about those who deny the existence of God himself? It does not mean that they do not examine their lives. They have other means to counter the negative effects of their actions. The reason behind it is not to target anyone, but to make our living a collective responsibility for all the good and bad that takes place due to our human action.

For us, IYCS members, the time of Lent should be a time to evaluate our lives in the light of the Gospel and the teachings of Christ and bring about a change in our self and in our attitudes. What can we do during this lent?

Here are a few suggestions to set your life straight:



1. Though the Year of Mercy ended, the deeds of Mercy continue with you.
2. The day of the POOR is not be limited to one day at the end of the liturgical year, extend it to everyday.
3. You reach out to the needy people consciously, through your deeds of charity, so that God, revealing himself through these persons might touch your heart and melt it like snow to absorb the spirit of God.
4. Praying more time during this season will draw you closer to God. Put yourself in the presence of God, every moment in all that you do. It will help you experience him in reality.
5. Knowledge of God is very important to do all these things and hence expand your God experience through reading and meditating on the Word of God.
6. Giving alms is a good deed and expected of you during this season. Reaching out to your brethren should be your utmost task. You can feel and experience the presence of Jesus in your neighbour. It should not prevent you from doing this all through your life in every day basis; especially when someone is really in need, may it be in kind or prayer or through your availability.
7. During this season, through various social and spiritual actions, you are reminded that you are not the master, but caretaker of this creation. Hence, resolve to take care of this beautiful creation and prevent it from further degradation and preserve it for your future generation.
8. Involving yourself in the humanitarian work will enable you to evaluate yourself and find out how far you also are a cause to this misery, directly or indirectly and to amend your vulgar ways of maligning the world.
9. We are a sinful generation. We are cleansed from our original sin through Baptism, but we continue to sin more and more. This cleansing should take place every moment. The mercy doesn't end with one blessing. It continues to flow in you, every moment when you are open to the spirit of God.
10. Repentance is a special task performed during this season. It is not a time bound activity, rather a lifelong process of cleansing and purifying our souls in this carnal body. Eventually safeguard your immortality through the efforts you put in at this life.
11. Sacrament of Reconciliation is another feasible tool for you to accept your inefficiency to deal with your human body and mind. You need to get in touch with the Divine, which will cleanse you from the wretchedness of sin and malice. Reconciliation with God and your brethren should go hand in hand. Thus you regain the lost communication with self, others and God.

During this season you come across many Gospel stories by which God promises to come to your aid through his unending mercy and grace. (Eg : Lk 10 : 25-37 – Good Samaritan ; Lk 15 : 11-32 – Prodigal son)

The time of Grace is here! The time of blessing is here! Explore it through your acts of mercy and prepare yourself for the event of Resurrection, which only will explain you the ultimate meaning of your life on earth. God bless you. Wish you a blessed time of Grace in this Lent.

Questions for reflection:

1. What is your understanding Sacrament of Reconciliation?
2. What do you understand by Mercy of God?
3. What is your action plan for this Lenten season to reconcile with God and your SELF?
4. What is your decision to reach out to your neighbour to experience God and make your Easter a brighter event?