

A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

The Gospel today states the watch phrase for the entirety of the Season of Lent:

“The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.”

This phrase has two parts that we need to keep in mind. The first part reminds us that God is always near to us. Not only in the sense of God being everywhere throughout creation, but also that the time when God will be revealed in all His might and splendor is coming near. True, we do not know exactly when that time will be. God works on His own schedule, not our schedule. However, it will come and every day, every hour, brings that time closer to fulfillment. And, when that time comes, we - God's creation - want to be ready to be part of His kingdom.

That leads us to the second part of the watch phrase for Lent. How do we become ready to become part of the Kingdom of God? Christ gives us the answer. First, we must cast aside our sinful ways that are foreign to God's goodness and teachings. All of the sinful attitudes and actions that are within us or come forth from within us must be swept out. This is the repentance portion of the watch phrase. Next, having swept out the vices and sins from within us we must replace them with the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who has come to free us from the power of sin and death.

This second part is difficult. It is painful and hard to make an honest account of our actions and habits and see where we have harmed ourselves, our neighbors, and our relationship with God. A serious review of our actions will reveal many mistakes we have made; whether they be intentional or made through callousness. Yet, it must be done if we are to truly repent for our actions and ask the Lord for forgiveness. Having sought the Lord's forgiveness and resolved to change from our former ways we next need to replace those former ways with God's ways. From the Word of God, Jesus Christ, we learn what God's ways are and so we seek not only to follow them, but also to make them a part of who we are. This is what we should be striving to do during the Season of Lent.

During the Season of Lent there are numerous opportunities to go to the Sacrament of Confession which is necessary to the repentance portion of the Lenten watch phrase. Confessions are heard every Wednesday evening 7pm-8pm and every Saturday afternoon from 3.30pm-4.30pm. In addition, there will be parish confessions on Sunday, March 3rd beginning at 4pm when there will be several priests present.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Eickhoff
Pastor