

Friday After Ash Wednesday – 2/8

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin.” (Isaiah 58:6-7)

Joe Smith has been out of prison for six months but Joe Smith hasn't been free. Joe's family and neighbors had put him in a box, a cell that is every bit as oppressive as the prison cell he had occupied. Joe only became a free man since the owner of the local hardware store fasted. When he offered Joe a job, the storeowner engaged in a fast from self-righteousness!

Martha thinks her best days of service are over. No longer can she work at the soup kitchen giving food to the hungry because her arthritis had gotten so bad. Her financial resources are such that she can't contribute much in the collection box for the poor. What Martha doesn't realize is that she feeds the hungry everyday. Martha is a poet and everyone who read her delightful verses knows that they had been fed their daily bread of beauty. Martha doesn't seem to realize that most of us feed the hungry simply by sharing our own unique gifts and talents.

Connie understands the plight of the homeless people on the streets of her city. She volunteers every week at the local shelter but Connie isn't fasting. Connie promotes her own image in the community but she is never really open to the strangers she meets. She never gives those most in need a home in her heart.

Bill approaches the Lenten season with great resolve. This year he will organize a clothes drive for the Tsunami victims. What Bill doesn't see is the need of his co-worker. This was the man whom everyone made fun of because he was different. Everyday this man was made vulnerable to the jokes and pranks of the others. Bill could clothe him, protect him, but he just stands by silently and watches.

Marie fasts for her kin every day. Marie cares for the environment not just because it was good for humanity but because it was a benefit to all of creation.

If we only read scripture for literal meaning we may not understand the message that is there for us personally.

Reflection Questions

- 1. Do I cover my neighbor's naked self esteem with a cloak of affirmation?*
- 2. How can I feed the hungry in my midst?*

Prayer: Jesus, help me see beyond the words to the know the meaning of Your Word.