

## *Second Wednesday of Lent – 2/20*

"Jeremiah prayed to the Lord in these words: 'Give heed to me, O Lord, and listen to what my adversaries say! Is evil a recompense for good? Yet they have dug a pit for my life. Remember how I stood before you to speak good for them, to turn away your wrath from them.'" (Jeremiah 18:19-20)

Years ago I asked my students to write down five things about themselves that they would like to improve. Most students completed the task in less than two minutes. Then I asked each student to list five qualities that they possessed. After five minutes I noticed that most of the students struggled to generate those five attributes. I then asked them to come up with at least three qualities. Even then some of the students sat with blank stares on their faces. They were unable to find even three. The next day I gave each student a small stone. On that stone I wrote down a quality about them that I particularly admired. As I gave the stone to the student I said the word out loud and explained why I thought each person had the quality that I suggested. It was interesting to see the reaction on the faces of the students. Many blushed and acted embarrassed and for once they were at a loss for words. They couldn't voice their feelings yet as I went on with the class that day I noticed several students picked up their rock over and over again. They gazed at the word I wrote and there seemed to be a sense of reverence about the way they held the rock.

Lent is indeed a time for reflection, but six weeks spent in self-examination must encompass more than finding our faults. It is true that we can also use this time to touch our woundedness because woundedness untended becomes the fodder for sin.

As we acknowledge our pain God can heal the regions of our heart that need His touch most of all. But perhaps we are also meant to see the positive aspects of our lives as well during Lent. For many of us perhaps this will be more difficult, more painful than claiming our sinfulness.

Jeremiah was not afraid or embarrassed to point out to God the good work that he had done. To claim our giftedness is not boasting. It could be a way of honoring the work that God has done in our hearts. When we claim our compassionate heart or the courage that allows us to stand up for those being treated unfairly we claim the work of Jesus in our hearts. Perhaps today we too might want to look at where we have gone right instead of where we have gone wrong.

### *Reflection Questions*

*1. How can I more fully use my gifts for the glory of God?*

*Prayer: Lord, may I see my gifts as clearly as I see my faults. May I always use them in Your humble service. Amen.*