

*“Filled to the Brim with what Truly Satisfies”*

By Rev. Don McCann

*“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food”.*

~ Isaiah 55:1-2

Lent can be a time of minimizing our dependence on the world around us. For some it is a time of self-imposed deprivation of one of the pleasures of life. (“I’m giving up chocolate for Lent.”) The day before Ash Wednesday is celebrated by some as Shrove Tuesday, or Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras. It is a day to let loose, eat all your rich foods, and prepare to start a more reserved life during Lent.

Giving up something, though, is only half of the Lenten call to self-discipline. What good does it do to give up favorite foods or past times and simply replace them with something else?

The focus of this time of Lent, of the ashes on Ash Wednesday, of the Scripture lessons, of our self-discipline, and of our time together is to make us more intentional about our faith and our discipline. We use this time to concentrate on the life, the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we give up or cut back on something we enjoy, we will obviously miss it. There will be cravings for it. There will be temptations to splurge (just this once!). When those urges and temptations come upon us, don’t let those feelings go to waste. Remind yourself why you have these feelings: you gave up that desired thing. Then remind yourself why you gave it up: to focus more on God. Then focus on God – in prayer, Scripture reading, meditation, fellowship or whatever spiritual discipline draws you closer to God.

The prophet Isaiah asks, “Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” The prophet challenges us to seek the food that does not cost and the sustenance that is free. That is of course the Word, the Love, and the Grace of God.

As we face the challenges of this Lenten season, let us always remember the faithfulness of God and God’s ongoing care of us. Do not give up something just for the sake of giving up something. When we take away what we enjoy – even for just a while – let us fill that time and that craving with that which truly satisfies us, God.

“There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made know through Jesus Christ.”

— Blaise Pascal

**Prayer:**

**Gracious God, we seek to draw closer to you during this time of Lent. Forgive us for all the time and energy we spend pursuing that which does not truly satisfy. Guide us during this Lent, and always, to seek You and to “eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food” – the Word and Love of God. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.**