

Since met him, I can see!

We are entering into the Lenten season; one of the oldest celebrations of Christianity.

What are we celebrating today: Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

Invitation to enter into this Holy season of penitence and renewal.

We begin this season of forty days by taking Ashes upon our forehead in the sign of the cross

With the words: Reform your life and believe in the Good News.

How do we celebrate this season of renewal?_by prayer, fasting and sharing with those in need.

- **Prayer, fasting and sharing with those in need is part of the teaching of all great religious traditions: Jewish, Muslim and Christian.**
- **Jesus expected people to pray, fast and share. In today's gospel**
 - **He did not say, "IF you pray"; He said "WHEN you pray."**
 - **He did not say "IF you fast", He said, "WHEN you fast."**
 - **He did not say "IF you give to those in need." He said, "WHEN you give to those in need.**

It is clear that fasting, prayer and almsgiving is to how we celebrate this season of renewal.

When is it time to begin this season of renewal? In today's first reading Paul makes it very clear: NOW is the acceptable time; NOW is the day of salvation. Every year, just as Paul invited his community to enter into this Lenten season, so the Church invites us as well

Why do we enter into this holy season of renewal?

Possible reasons are:

- **To lose weight;**
- **To suffer a little;**
- **Out of guilt for our sins.**

I would like to take some time to reflect on just WHY we celebrate this holy season of Lent. I will need your help with this reflection

- 1. Have people get out of pews and look at pictures.**
- 2. Ask them one question: Which one most attracts them, draws their attention, and why.**
- 3. Do the exercise in silence. (reflective music in the background)**

4. Give them five minutes to wander and then return to their pews.
Share that image with the person next to them.
5. Do a random survey of the community.

Why do we enter into this season of renewal?

To meet Jesus:

We meet him in the life of the Spirit which flows from his passion death and resurrection:

It begins with the sacraments, reflective prayer and study, and care for others in our community and world.

To meet Jesus in the sacraments,

- especially the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

To meet Jesus in prayer:

- Little Black Book;
- in our homes,
- Reading the Bible;
- Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings,

To meet Jesus in reflective study;

- Emmaus faith sharing groups
- Day of prayer for young people
- Retreat for confirmation candidates

To meet Jesus in giving of our treasure to care for those in need:

Remember the story of Zaccheus

- Supporting the parish in its many outreach projects
- Bishops Relief Fund
- Soup Luncheon
- Rice Bowl

Fasting; letting go of those things and people who have a hold on us so that we can focus on **Meeting Jesus**;

- Food
- Alcohol and drugs
- Relationships
- Media: TV, cell phones, computers

Fr. Tim's comments to us about many of us who were baptized as children. Never focused on encountering the risen Lord in our lives.

That is WHY we celebrate the season.

We celebrate it not primarily to:

- To lose weight
- To suffer a little
- Out of guilt for our sins

But we celebrate it to Encounter the risen Lord and meet Jesus.

Hopefully by the end of Lent we can all say with more clarity,

Since met Jesus, I can see!