

SandalPrints

Issue # 152 ... Lent ... 2015AD

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis of Reconciliation - Palm Springs
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**We are troubadours
of God
who strive to move
peoples hearts
in order to lead them
to the joys
of the spirit.**

BRINGING CHRIST TO THE MARKETPLACE

By Richard Brakefield, J.D., S.F.O.

I remember reading not long ago about two men discussing the role of religion in public life. One man held the position that there is no place for religion in our public life and that certainly there should be no place whatsoever for any discussion of religion or fundamental moral principles in American politics. The other contended that religion is the very matrix upon which our fundamental social and political principals have been threaded and that, if forced into the closet, the fabric of our society will begin to unravel. Let's call the first man Jack and the latter Bill. In an attempt to further make his point, Jack challenged Bill to go into any group, the more prosperous and fanciful the better, and talk about how our most cherished rights, such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are given to us by our creator and how they are inalienable because we are children of our creator and how the purpose of government is to protect and preserve those sacred liberties. "See how many people will disagree with the proposition you articulate," said Jack, "and how many, even if they agree, will fail to admit it."

You know as well as I do that Jack was right. Try it yourself, if you doubt me. It is unfortunate and disappointing but nevertheless true that most people do not want to discuss religion or politics in a social environment and never in conjunction with political issues. One so often hears the admonition that any reference to religion, especially in connection with politics, is a subject that is off limits and to be avoided in ordinary social discourse. Some people seem to be ashamed of the very bedrock standard that our founding fathers proposed when they declared that we are endowed by God with basic rights that cannot be taken away. They may be denied us by a tyrannical government but never can they be separated from us. They are inherently ours. And they are ours simply because it is correctly in the nature of things that people are to be governed at their consent and that it is the first obligation of government to secure those inalienable rights and liberties for us and for our progeny. The problem, of course, is that there are so many people who are not shy when it comes to bad-mouthing religion in social discourse and so few to say something positive about it. This fact is discouraging but it ought not be threatening.

As Christians, we must not waste our energy and talent cursing the tendency of our culture toward a pagan materialism and the corruption of moral values. Rather we are called to enter the marketplace and bring the truth of Christ's saving sacrifice to everyone. We don't do so by forcing people to see things as we see them but by merely introducing a spark of light to the surrounding darkness of unbelief and social disintegration. The Lord will take care of the rest. When it comes to politics, we want a secular government but not devoid of fundamental religious principles that pertain to our freedoms and moral right and wrong. We may look to government to protect our liberty but we must take on the responsibility for maintaining the form of government we have been given and creating the social

atmosphere which we want to leave to those who come after us. It is not the role of government to instruct us in religious matters but it is certainly the role of the governed to maintain the principles by which government is to secure our liberties among which is the freedom to worship as we choose.

Therefore, it is our Christian obligation, however unpopular it may be, to voice our political opinions and to unashamedly bring Christ to the marketplace and into our social intercourse. Of the two positions taken by Jack and Bill in the story above, I like Bill's. There is no denying that Jack was right - most people don't feel comfortable engaging in a discussion of religion in social groups - but when the subject comes up should we steer away from such discussion? I don't think so. Certainly, we must not act in a way that effectively denies Christ's role in the forming of our principle's. We deny Christ at the risk of condemnation. Christ made this very clear: "If anyone declares publicly that he belongs to me, I will do the same for him before my Father in Heaven. But if anyone rejects me publicly, I will reject him before my Father in Heaven." [Matthew 10:32-33]

So how do we bring Christ to the market place? I think we must bring Christ's truth to others with gentleness not aggression. We need not be timid but we must be sensitive to the concerns of others. We may disagree but must not be disagreeable. We should never impose our ideas but submit them for consideration. In short, we need only strike the spark, the Holy Spirit will build the fire.



REALITY:

We all know that those who define the rules, control the game. So we try to mold, squeeze and confront ourselves all in an effort to conform to fit into that little file they have designated as being "our place". Power becomes the ability to define reality for others.

When we close out minds and out hearts and wallow in media induced fears (I saw it on TV therefore it must be true!). we allow others to define reality for us! By doing this, we have yielded our sovereignty and literally lost the game before it has even begun.

Lenten Reflections

The following are excerpts from a Lenten talk by
Father Edd Anthony

Lent is an English word, which comes to us from the Old High German word for spring, "Lenz." This word refers to the lengthening of days. Lent and length are related words. In all other languages the name of this season comes from the word "Forty." Lent is forty days of penance and prayer.

Lent - from Ash Wednesday morning to Holy Thursday afternoon.

Lent is the 40 day preparation for the Paschal Triduum. The 40 days are counted from the First Sunday of Lent to Holy Thursday. (The four days between ash Wednesday and the First Sunday are a prelude to the season.)

Lent is like Friday -- a time for serious prayer, fasting and works of charity, a time to give the earth and ourselves a spring cleaning; a time to turn away from our wanderings and travel home to God.

When spring comes, daytime grows longer than night. When the moon is full, darkness is driven away. On the Sunday after the first full moon of spring, (The day of the feast was not fixed on one date, but was determined by the same process that determined the Passover of the Jews: the spring lunar cycle) and so we Christians keep a Lord's day with all our might.

Holy Thursday evening, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday -- are the Paschal Triduum, meaning "the Three Days of Passover." The Triduum is the years heart! -- the three days of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ -- during these holiest of days we celebrate our passover in Christ.

History:

-By second century Christians were already preparing for Easter by a two-day fast as a sign of their grief over the price of salvation: the sufferings of Jesus.

-Within a hundred years this fast was extended to the entire week preceding the feast.

-By the fourth century the Church tried to re-live the events of Jesus's life and death. The lenten fast was lengthened to 40 days to imitate Jesus who fasted 40 days in the wilderness (Mark 1:13).

Lent is a season, a perfect time to look at our journey to God, how we are living out our faith, how our faith affects ourselves and others.

LENT IS A JOURNEY.

- Let it be for you this year, like a treasure hunt ... you are looking for the treasure of your whole self.
- You will be able to find this treasure if you are willing to look at all of your life with your inner eye.
- Your goal is to be able to see yourself as you really are and embrace what you see with love and understanding.
- This will require much reflective inner work with your memories.
- Your memories are your best friends.
- Walk with them during this season.
- There will be painful memories of feeling neglected, ridiculed, unloved, misunderstood, ignored, rejected.
- There will be memories of failure, sinfulness, ignorance, confusion.
- There will be happy memories of feeling alive, loved, safe and cared for, successful, excited, hopeful, noble and good.
- All of these memories are part of the story of your life.

Lent is a time for renewal and healing. Deep healing can take place in the human heart when we look upon the very things that have wounded us.

- We all have a tendency to complain about our woundedness and even to blame our present unhappiness upon the wounds of the past.
- Our Hebrew ancestors had the same problem.
- In the book of Numbers we see the people losing patience with God and Moses.
- They forgot about their many blessings of the past.
- Fiery serpents came upon the people and bit them.
- When Moses interceded for the people, God told him to make a replica of a serpent and raise it on a pole.
- Anyone who was bitten was to look upon it and be healed (Num21:6).
- This Lent do the same as your ancestors -- for you too have been bitten and blessed.
- Raise a banner -- a cross. It is your entire life.
- Each day look upon something that has bitten or blessed you.
- Understand it with your heart.
- Allow it to be integrated into your life.
- Then hang it on your banner -- your cross.

This is the cross you must embrace to experience healing -- to discover Easter glory.

- As your cross is raised remember that you are

not alone.

- Jesus, too, was raised on the cross.
- St. John tells us of the importance of being raised up: "...the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."
- If you are lifted up on the cross with Jesus you will be able to share in his glory.
- If you allow your frailty and your glory to be integrated you will find the treasure of your whole self and come to truly know God's love.

Franciscan Saints, Blesseds and Holy Ones February 2015

1. Bl. Veridiana of Castel Fiorentino, III Ord.
2. Presentation of the Lord
2. Mother Alexia Hoell, III Ord.
4. St. Joseph of Leonissa, I Ord.
5. Mother Maria Theresia Bonzel, III Ord..
6. St. Peter Baptist, Paul Miki and companions, martyrs of I & II Ord.
7. St. Colette, reformed II Ord.
11. Our Lady of Lourdes
14. St. Valentine, special day for all
17. St. Conrad of Piacenza, hermit III Ord.
18. ASH WEDNESDAY
22. First Sunday - Lent
25. Bl. Sebastian of Aparicio, I Ord.

Saints often jar us because they challenge our ideas about what we need for "the good life." "I'll be happy when ...," we may say, wasting an incredible amount of time on the periphery of life. People like St. Joseph of Leonissa challenge us to face life courageously and get to the heart of it: life with God. Joseph was a compelling preacher because his life was as convincing as his words.

Franciscan Canticle Appeal

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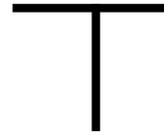
FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

I dreamed I was walking
along the beach with the Lord,
and across the sky flashed
scenes from my life.
For each scene I noticed
two sets of footprints in the sand;
one belonged to me,
the other to the Lord.
When the last scene of my life
flashed before us I looked
back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that many times
along the path of my life,
there was only one
set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened
at the very lowest
and saddest times in my life.
I questioned the Lord about it:
"Lord, you said that once
I decided to follow you,
you would walk
with me all the way.
But I have noticed that
during the most troublesome times
in my life,
there is only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why
in times when I needed you most,
you would leave me."
The Lord replied:
"My precious child,
I would never leave you
during your times of trial
and suffering.
When you see only
one set of footprints,
it was then that
I carried you."

-Author unknown

What would life be if we didn't
have the courage to change things.
Vincent Van Gogh

Let us pray for the intentions of those who
asked us to pray for them.



A brother monk said: Abba, a variety of thoughts are coming into my mind and I am in danger. The old man took him out in the air and said: Open your robe and take hold of the wind. And he answered: No, I cannot do it. The old man said: If you cannot do it, neither can you prevent those thoughts from coming in. But what you should do is to stand firm against them.

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Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!
Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!
Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance!
And transform your whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation!
So that you too may feel what His friends feel as they taste the hidden sweetness which God Himself has reserved from the beginning for those who love Him.

St. Clare of Assisi