



### ***Our Lenten Journey Within Reflections for 2024***

Yesterday marked the beginning of our 40 days of Lent. There are so many ways to prepare for the Easter celebration during Lent. One of the ways that always has appealed to me is to see Lent as the time to reflect and deepen our relationship with the Divine who dwells within. In our busy lives we often do not spend time with the Lord in personal prayer. Maybe we spend time performing ritualistic prayers which are important but are only an appetizer to the entrée of a personal connection to the Divine.

How do we get closer to a Being we have been taught dwells in the sky or heaven? One of the ways to become more connected to the Divine is to follow the example of Jesus. Have you noticed that every time Jesus has performed any kind of encounter with people seeking a closer connection with him or the Divine, he goes off to pray. Prayer was the speaking from the heart to the Divine without guilt, shame, or fear. Jesus came to a new awareness of the Divine at a young age which was developed and affirmed in his ministry and the 30 days he spent in the desert, and it was that the Divine is not a rule keeper, an angry parent or an abusive parent, or someone who takes pleasure in giving suffering so we will behave or love the Divine more. No Jesus awareness was the Divine is Love an all-embracing forgiving love who recognized in creation that we would need to develop and during these stages' life would be messy and at times emotionally, physically, or spiritually painful. It is often our religious training which gave and sometimes still gives us images of the Divine that are meant to control us by making us afraid. This is not the way of Jesus.

Jesus learned in his ministry and prayer that this Divine Creator has nothing but our best interest in mind, but we must open our hearts and minds to the Lord's presence within. When we reflect on the gospel and how the Spirit inspire our lives with the Word we change. We become more loving and giving and see that prayer and action, gestures of love, are the way of the Lord. We begin to see that our life and all lives matter and are interconnected so that if one brother or sister is hurting, we all hurt. We begin to see that the earth is gift to us to use and replenish for our lives not to be abused and used for selfish reasons.

The gospel message and the call and challenge to Love is what Lent is all about. No matter what we give up or do, if at the end of Lent, we have not experienced a deeper understanding of the Divine Presence within we may have wasted our time. Let us not do something for ourselves to beautify us but rather do something for one of our brothers and sisters who are hurting. There are so many causes which we can choose to participate in. Let us choose the one which brings new meaning and life to us and others. Prayer is the first step of change action is the completion the great Amen to our prayer.

May your Lenten journey be one of new life and meaningful change for you and others.

Peace and Blessings

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