

Know God

The Spirit of God led Jesus into the desert to prepare him for his ministry. This spirit as we read from the scriptures moved him immediately after his baptism. God just assured Jesus of his abiding love and approval, motivated by these, Jesus journeyed to the desert to make a better meaning of God's love. This particular journey to the wilderness will later lead him through the Cross to the salvation of many. Why journey into the wilderness? Jesus was to make a difficult decision either to say "Yes" to God and die for the salvation of many or turn his back to God's mission to the ruin of humanity and creation. It was difficult and challenging time. The Bible compared this period of Jesus life as like living with wild beasts. He was consumed in thought to the point that earthly food meant little for him in the forty days he spent in prayer. This desert experience helped Jesus to grow closer to his Father and draw a clearer conviction of his mission. Such is the story of Jesus' life, mission, and trust of divine abiding presence. For Jesus, the desert story is a life lived. It was his practical experience of total self-giving, mortification and fasting in a spiritually soaked prayer.

In the same manner, during this Lenten season, the mother Church leads all her children to a divine seclusion where they can practice praying through fasting and charitable acts. The aim is to draw all Christians towards a more sincere relationship with God and the people God has placed in their lives. All Lenten observances are meant to focus on union with the self, God and neighbor. In prayers we are lifted to God. In fasting we arrest our concupiscence through self-control to the glory of God. Through charitable actions, we are drawn to many people around us in the fulfillment of the scriptures; feed the thirsty and the hungry, cloth the naked, be kind and house the homeless, visit the sick and strangers. It is the journey of the will undertaken freely. Lenten practices are meant to produce goodness not sad looks. Lent is like the ashes we planted on ourselves on Wednesday as sign of the dust of the earth at death which leads to the glory of the resurrection we must share with the Lord.

For us to draw closer to God, we must first have the inner peace and thankfulness to God for creating and saving us. This peaceful gratitude will further help us appreciate our journey with God. If we become a thankful people, it will not take long before we develop true love for God. One may ask: how can we do this? By

sincerely using every opportunity to know, love and serve God here on earth we shall be led to his glory. Here in the Sacred Heart Church, our first goal is to know God. Since we want to utilize every possible avenue which leads to God, we have invested in many programs of religious education. There are four groups of bible study or faith formation every week. Each supports the time and activities of our family demography so that all may have opportunity to know and love God. We lead the Grand Valley churches in postmodern internet religious educational programs, we have even purchased FORMED which contains many Catholic books both in video and audio. Lent will be a good time to learn more about God. How can we love him if we do not even know him? How can we love our neighbor for Christ sake if our knowledge of him is hearsay? How can we fast, pray, and be charitable if we do not have a firm relationship with God? So, since the essence of lent is seeking times and places of spiritual sobriety where we can nurture our relationship with God and one-another, I think we have everything we need here to do just that.

MISSION: Take time to visit the church and pray: there is full day adoration every Friday; the church is open every day step-in and have a moment with God. If we know God, it will not be difficult to love and serve him so that we may share eternity with him.

Remain blessed,

Your priest and brother, Father Chrysogonus.