

Holy Half Hour for March 2017

The Path of Lent

Hymn: (suitable hymn)

Introduction:

We have before us on the altar a great Mystery: Jesus present in our midst. Let us for a few moments in the silence of our hearts, reverently acknowledge his presence in our midst, trying to actually feel that presence. (Pause)

We have already begun the season of Lent, a time of repentance, a time of conversion. Conversion is a path and Lent is the perfect time to ask ourselves where we are in our journey: Where am I now? Where am I headed? How do I get there?

Scripture reading: Mark 1: 12-15 (to be read from the Bible) **Silence 5 mins**

Points for Reflection: Kindly reading the reflection very slowly

On Ash Wednesday the Church invites us to participate in a special way during the celebration of the Eucharist through the reception of ashes on our heads. During this rite, so rich in symbolism, the priest reminds us of Christ's words that we read in this Gospel passage: "Repent, and believe in the good news." **Pause**

We have reflected continuously on the theme of conversion, yet if the Church invites us every year to renew our efforts there has to be something special behind it. We have to dig deep within our souls and ask ourselves some questions: Where am I now? Where am I headed? How do I get there? **Pause for silent reflection**

1. Where Am I Now?

Before we consider our destination, our first step along this path of conversion is redirecting our compass by changing our coordinates to those of the Gospel instead of our selfishness and pride ... Then we need to know where are starting from, where are at present. Where we are determines the path to our goal. **Pause**

How is my relationship with God? I could have the goal pretty clear but have no interest in getting there because it appears to be arduous and painful. Or maybe I am the pessimist whose goal is always too far off, the cup is always half-empty, or just not worth the effort. Or am I already on the path, step by step, some days better than others. Where am I? **Pause for silent reflection**

2. Where Am I Headed?

Jorge Manrique, a Spanish author from the XIV century, once wrote that our lives are like rivers: "*The beginning is our birth/ the body of water is our life/ and the end is our passing.*" Our life, spiritual side included, is a journey toward God, and at our death he embraces us definitively. Yet we are the ones who choose the path with our choices, decisions, actions and thoughts. **Pause**

The essential point for reaching our destination, even if this seems more than obvious, is knowing where we are going. If we are going away on a vacation, before we get in the car, we first decide where we are going whether it be the nearest beach or the south island of New Zealand. **Pause**

We need to make this same decision with our life and this Gospel tells us very clearly where we need to be headed: Believe in the Good News. In other words live according to Christ's teachings, his criteria, summarized in the new law of love: "Love one another as I have loved you." **Pause for silent reflection**

3. How Do I Get There?

And now we reach the most important part. We know where we are going and where we are starting from, now we have to get up and go step by step, serenely yet constantly. We have to go forward, even if the steps are small. **Pause**

Let us apply these simple ideas to Lent: the Church teaches us that life, especially Lent, is a pilgrimage, a journey. Let us reflect on what we are trying to achieve at the end of these forty days: to be more charitable at home, to obey my parents, to be more affectionate with my children ...Then let's see where we are and finally what steps we have to take to get there. **Pause for silent reflection**

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: The 40-day pilgrimage to Easter that began on Ash Wednesday is just a few days old. We pray that God, who sustained Jesus in his 40 days of temptations and suffering, will support us on our journey also. We pray for all those in need.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. That our Holy Father, our Cardinals, Bishops, Priests and Religious may continue to prepare the faithful and explain the basic tenets of our faith so that the faithful may become familiar with them. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
2. For the Church: that we may be faithful to our identity as children of God and remain single-minded in seeking to do God's will. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
3. For the grace of reflection and awareness: that we may slow down and be aware of the hungers of our heart and recognize the gifts that God wishes to give us. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
4. For the grace to face temptations: that the Spirit of God will lead us to freedom and wholeness as we face trials and temptations in life. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
5. For this community of faith: that through our Lenten journey we may renew our baptismal covenant and become more faithful Christians in word and deed. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
6. For the gift of listening: that we may be open to the Word of God, allow our hearts to be transformed, and resist the temptation to use it for our agenda. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
7. Pray for you own personal and local needs. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.

Leader: God our Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus, who spent forty day in the desert in prayer and fasting. Grant us the grace that we too may go through this period of Lent with devotion and sincerity of heart. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction hymn: Let us bow in adoration

Divine Praises:

Concluding Hymn: (suitable hymn)

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For the
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