



YEAR A – MARCH 1, 2020

The readings today from Genesis, the letter to the Romans and the Gospel of St. Matthew remind us that our journey here on earth includes all kinds of temptations, the kind of temptations that can side track us from our eternal destiny and in the worst case scenario can actually enable us to lose our souls. That doesn't have to happen.

God has provided us with all the means we need to save our souls and get to heaven. Lent is the time to reflect on where we are on our journey with Jesus, where we want to go, and how we're going to get there.

It means that some things in our lives must change. "To be human is to change, to be perfect is to have changed often."

Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Jesus reminds us in another place that unless we do penance, we will perish. No one can tell you what form of penance you should practice during Lent. It isn't a matter of one size fits all.

Recall when Jesus was criticized because his disciples did not fast like the Scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus in effect replied that fasting from food and drink is not the only way to please God. In fact, it is not the kind of fasting that God prefers.

On Friday, the first reading at Mass addressed that very situation. God revealed through the prophet Isaiah that the kind of fasting that he preferred had nothing to do with food & drink. Listen to the word of God.

He says, "This is the kind of fasting that I desire. Release those who are bound unjustly." Do you know anyone who is bound unjustly. You can be bound unjustly without having your hands tied behind your back. Some people are bound unjustly by a sense of guilt that has nothing to do with the will of God. Do you know someone like that, and do you have the power to release them?

God goes on, "Share your bread with the hungry. Shelter the homeless. Cloth the naked." That is the kind of fasting that God prefers. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are not found in the Ten Commandments, but they are found in the Command of Jesus.

You get to choose the form of penance that fits your lifestyle. You can't go wrong if you choose one of the forms that is pleasing to God. For a few moments in prayerful silence, reflect on what you will do during this Holy Season of Lent, and then - decide to do it.

