

## Deacon's Beacons

March 6, 2019 (Ash Wednesday)

Is this the manner of fasting I would choose,  
a day to afflict oneself?  
To bow one's head like a reed,  
and lie upon sackcloth and ashes?  
Is this what you call a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?<sup>9</sup>  
Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose:  
releasing those bound unjustly,  
untying the thongs of the yoke;  
Setting free the oppressed,  
breaking off every yoke?  
Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry,  
bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house;  
Clothing the naked when you see them,  
and not turning your back on your own flesh? Isaiah 58:5-7

As we begin the Lenten season, let us contemplate this passage. It is our custom to “give up something” for Lent. There is nothing wrong with that but it is somewhat self-centered. Trying to improve yourself is great. However, we usually go back to whatever we gave up when Lent is over. Think more about what the prophet Isaiah is calling us to here. This is an invitation to reach out in love to those who need us. This is an opportunity to identify and rise up against injustice in the world. This is where and how Lent can really make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us. Step out in courage to follow the call of the prophet this Lent.

Go raibh síocháin Chríost a bheith in éineacht leat.

Deacon Mike