

Ash Wednesday 2010

Inside the front door of the 8th grade classroom, the bulletin board shouts in bold letters: "I LOVE LENT!"

What is your reaction? Do you love Lent? I must admit that I am going to try this Lent. I am going to try to love Lent.

The gloom and doom of earlier Lents gives way to a truer experience. . . 40 focused days of reflection, joy, hope, freshness, Springtime! Energy erupts unbidden, pushing up from the center of creation, surging in body, soul, and spirit. Thus we discover that the Anglo-Saxon word for Springtime is the root word for Lent.

How do we come to the new stories, the truth, our truth, which are longing to be told in our lives? How can we enter our lives anew during this holy time, shedding old labels and discomforts that keep us in prison? How can we touch that sacred place within us so full of love and possibility? How can we become more attentive to God, the One in whom we live and move and have our being?

No matter what practices we choose for our Lenten journey (it's only for 40 days after all), allow them to bring freshness to our days and our thinking. Let them bring us to a greater awareness of the "within" of things.

Maybe we could fast from technology one day each week and experience a liberation(!), an uncluttered bit of time to be.

Maybe we could listen to Earth awakening; allured out of doors to participate in spring's great promise.

Maybe we could listen reflectively to our written scriptures

and their Promise of Life.

Maybe we could practice a fast or almsgiving that brings us into solidarity with the hungers of our world.

But let us practice happiness, the joy of remembering how deeply we are loved.

May this Lent bring us all to a deeper attention to the Sacred WITHIN, and remind us of the ever-widening circle of Love and Compassion.

Based on an article by Mary Southard, CSJ