

By Pat Haggerty

I just read somewhere that the word “Lent” comes from a word meaning spring. I can see that! Lent is a time for us to prepare to burst forth as true believers, as we follow Christ during His journey leading up to His death and Resurrection.

I like to think of Lent as a time not of “bursting” but of slowing down. I think of the French word “lent/e”, which means slow. I shall proceed “lentement” (slowly) into this journey that is the essential core of who we are as Christians. I shall slowly enter into a mode that centers on reflection, sacrifice, alms-giving, and spiritual exercise. Believe me when I tell you that there is nothing slow about my life!

What I am suggesting is that slowness become synonymous with thoughtfulness. I will try to travel the road that is Lent in a thoughtful, purposeful way. So that not only am I enriched by the Spirit, but so that others will be the beneficiaries of my thoughtfulness. It’s not so much that I will give up something that will ultimately benefit me, but that I will follow a mindful course of action that will benefit others. For example, I might not “give up” eating chocolate (although that’s always a good Lenten sacrifice), but I will “give up” talking about others. I might not stop eating chips with every sandwich at lunch, but I might prepare a lunch for a nearby soup kitchen.

I think Lent is a little about inventiveness. How can we be inventive Christians in the way that we look at this journey? Can we pray more? Certainly. Can we give more? No doubt. Can we love more? Absolutely!

Let us think of the opening words of the second reading for Ash Wednesday: "Brothers and sisters: We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20)

We should use that as our mantra during Lent. We must be "ambassadors for Christ." During this special year of living faith, let us live our faith as if God is counting on us. I think he is! Let us use Lent as our pathway to becoming better Christians and better evangelizers of all that we believe in.