



Lent Challenges Us to Question What We Treasure in Life

Jesus gives us the following motto to live by during Lent: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Lent is a unique time in the Church's calendar that focuses on detachment from the things of this world. As Jesus went into the desert to pray, so do we go into the desert to reflect on our lives and the state of our souls.

In particular, St. John Paul II commented in his message for Lent in 1980 on how Lent is a time to examine the "treasures" of our lives:

The spirit of penance and its practice impel us to detach ourselves sincerely from our unnecessary possessions, and even sometimes from our necessary ones, which prevent us from really "being" as God wishes us to be: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". Is our heart attached to material wealth, to power over others, to subtle ways of dominating? If so, we need Christ, the Easter Liberator, who, if we wish him to, can free us of all the bonds of sin that hold us fast.

St. John Paul II then continues by challenging us not only to identify the false treasures we cling to, but also to get rid of them:

Let us prepare to allow ourselves to be enriched by the grace of the Resurrection, by ridding ourselves of all false treasures: the material goods that we do not need are often the very conditions for the survival of millions of human beings. Also, in addition to their bare subsistence, hundreds of millions of people are waiting for us to help them to give themselves the necessary means both for their own full human advancement and for the economic and cultural development of their countries.

In this way, we can purify our hearts through detachment and charity. We can give away our treasures so that others may prosper.

As we enter into Lent, may we ask ourselves what we truly treasure in life and try to rid ourselves of anything that might take us away from God.

Lent is a Perfect Time to Take an Inventory of Your Spiritual Life

Take advantage of the Lenten season by looking over your life, discovering your strengths and weaknesses.

Lent presents to us a unique time of the year when we are invited to look inside ourselves and at our spiritual lives, discovering the good and bad that is there. If we are to be completely honest with ourselves, we will notice many areas that need growth and improvement. This can often be difficult for us, as we may not always want to see our faults and failings. However, it is important to take a spiritual inventory during Lent, as it gives us an opportunity to reconcile ourselves with God.

Pope Benedict XVI recommended this practice in his message for Lent in 2011.

[T]he Lenten journey, in which we are invited to contemplate the Mystery of the Cross, is meant to reproduce within us “the pattern of his death” (Ph 3: 10), so as to effect a deep conversion in our lives; that we may be transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus; that we may firmly orient our existence according to the will of God; that we may be freed of our egoism, overcoming the instinct to dominate others and opening us to the love of Christ. The Lenten period is a favorable time to recognize our weakness and to accept, through a sincere inventory of our life, the renewing Grace of the Sacrament of Penance, and walk resolutely towards Christ.

For some of us, this spiritual inventory will be more difficult to endure, as we already know our weaknesses and fear that more light upon our sins will lead us into despair. The good news is that God reaches out to us in his mercy, ready to accept us into his loving arms. We need not be afraid of our failings, as God is ready to pick us up and set us on the right path.

