

From the Clergy Assistant

“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” Isaiah 55:2

Although this might be jumping ahead a bit since we will not hear the reading from Isaiah 55:1-11 until the Easter Vigil service, this verse serves as a “check” for me during Lent. Growing up in a large Irish Catholic family, it was just a given that we gave up eating sweets and snacking between meals during Lent—our version of fasting. In college, I was taught that it was more important to *do* something “positive” rather than to “sacrifice” during Lent, so I practiced that for a few years. Then came the “Anglican phase” of “both/and”... Each year we are invited during the Ash Wednesday service to prepare for the Lord’s passion and resurrection by self-examination and repentance; prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word (BCP, pp. 264-265).

I do enjoy the intentionality of the season of Lent; the opportunity to re-focus on the de-cluttering of our daily lives in order to gain a better look at our lives and to be honest about the ways in which we are not living faithfully as children of God, as members of the body of Christ. Lent is a time for re-examining how we spend our time, energy, and resources; in which ways are we spending them—or allowing them to be eaten away—on “that which is not Bread”? On “that which will not satisfy”? What are the little things that we allow daily to cause static on the line of God’s daily invitation to Bread and labor that *does* satisfy?

I tend to be a “collector”... As John mentioned about himself in a previous edition of *The Tower*, I too tend to attach great sentimental value to things... And I also tend to collect things, thinking that “*someone* could really use this”...or “*someday* this could really come in handy”... One small Lenten spiritual practice that I have found particularly powerful over the last years has been for me to take one “collection area,” a desktop, closet, or cabinet, and prayerfully, intentionally go through each item and “find an appropriate home” for it (according to all those articles that continually appear predominantly in the “women’s magazines” on “clearing out the clutter”...) But I do find that if I do this as *prayer*, I do experience a sense of “de-cluttering” of that pathway of God’s invitation to the only Bread, labor, and Life that can truly satisfy.

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