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From the Clergy Associate Simple Distraction

Truth be told, I think one of the reasons I have always “enjoyed” Lent over the years is that it gave me that extra push in giving up something I knew was not very life-giving (such as staying up too late watching mindless TV...) and doing something which would be more life-giving (such as enjoying the quiet and going to bed at a decent time...). To try to simplify and to be more intentional in my daily life seems less overwhelming for me when I am looking at a defined amount of days and weeks.

In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine wrote, “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee”. Any moments in which we have experienced God’s presence with us, seem to create greater longing for such moments; but there can be so many distractions that get in the way of allowing time and space for those moments. Oftentimes it is with these distractions that we try to fill our restless hearts; but in these distractions our hearts can never truly rest. As much as I might try, eating any amount of chocolate will never create that rest for me, and certainly not staying up too late watching mindless TV... But if there could be one thing that we could do each day, or even once a week, during Lent which could allow each of us even a small amount of time and space in which to intentionally try to re-orient our lives, to remove a distraction, in order to get a better look at how we live our daily lives and how we live in our relationships with each other and with God.

A couple of years ago, a colleague gave up her daily time on Facebook for Lent, and used that time instead for other activities, such as getting back to her painting, which she found were much more life-giving for her and also allowed her moments of quiet reflection. Years ago, there was a small group in my office which, rather than going out to eat or to shop on their lunch hour on Tuesdays during Lent, would go to Noon Mass at a nearby Roman Catholic church. Once they finally dragged me along with them one Tuesday, I realized what a difference those 40 minutes made in the rest of my day and my week. Maybe for you, it is taking a 10-minute walk during the middle of your busy day just to clear your head. Or joining us for Morning Prayer some mornings, or for one of the Wednesday Holy Eucharist services. May there be something for you this Lent, no matter how simple, which will allow you to make the time and space to reflect on your relationship with God. “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.”

The Rev. Joan Conley