

Reflection for Thursday after Ash Wednesday 2021

Moses says choose life or death and, of course, we choose life. If Moses had said, *“if you want to live your life to the full, reach your utmost potential, discover true, deep and lasting happiness”*, we would all choose life. This is only possible, however, by placing God at the centre of our lives as Moses says. Why? Because none of this is achievable without God’s help, motivation, challenge, guidance and forgiveness.

When Jesus speaks about his cross, we are only too aware of the suffering he went through in shouldering it. Some believe that suffering is a necessary part of life. Suffering teaches us about our vulnerability, our mortality, our limitations and that we are not in control of everything or everybody. Suffering also teaches us about our need for God but it also reveals that the love of God reaches out to us in those times we feel lost and forsaken, when we lack hope and are filled with despair. These are precious moments even though often we only appreciate them afterwards. Let us not forget that the Cross is a symbol of salvation, a symbol of freedom, the sign of redemption and the conquering of evil. Wouldn’t we want to be able to share in that in some way? Our **prayer** will help us discern how best to do this. Our **fasting** will teach us about vulnerability and the power of evil to push us away from God and inspire us to help those in need. Our **almsgiving** is our way of setting people free from whatever oppresses them and to inspire hope and dignity. This is why we choose life - the Life won for us on the cross and shared with us through the resurrection in the eucharist.

O Lord, this new season of Lent is -

a time to dig deeper, to reach wider, to love stronger.

A time to embrace death and walk towards the cross;

to pray, fast, and give our lives in service.

A time to give up or to take on,

to contemplate life and death,

to face the realities of our broken world,

and to dance with the darkness.

In these days be with us, walk with us, inspire us, call us, motivate us.

Be with us to serve our neighbours, to wrestle with your Word and sit in the silence.

As you relentlessly love, may we relentlessly seek you.

Come, Lord Jesus.

We are here, waiting, hoping, loving, seeking you. Amen.

Fasting from Jokes. . . . !!