

Reflection Friday after Ash Wednesday March 2022

St Augustine makes plain the benefits of Fasting:-

Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, and kindles the true light of chastity. Enter again into yourself.

In other words, fasting helps free us from what harms us, what destroys the good in our lives, what hides God from us. It helps us focus more clearly on God and put other people first. Putting other people first, we never come second. Both benefit! The process makes us more aware of how God is present and how blessed and enriching is that presence in us. Called to fast for peace on Ash Wednesday by Pope Francis let us continue to take opportunities to fast for peace until the conflict in Ukraine is resolved. Follow the example of the people of Nineveh!

Pope Francis: *"I have great pain in my heart over the situation in Ukraine. Like me, many throughout the world feel anguish and concern. The peace of all is threatened by partisan interests. Jesus taught that the diabolical evil of violence should be answered with the weapons of God, prayer and fasting." The pope calls us to intense prayer and fasting. "Ask the Queen of Peace to preserve the world from the madness of war." 'Human dignity is the same for all human beings: when I trample on the dignity of another, I am trampling on my own'.*

Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

We pray for the people of Ukraine and Russia; for their countries and their leaders. We pray for all who are afraid; that your arms hold them in this time of great fear. We pray for all those with power over life and death; that they will choose life, and life in its fullness. We pray for those who choose war; remind them that you direct your people to turn swords into ploughshares and seek peace. We pray that world leaders be inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ. Lord, we pray for peace for Ukraine. Amen.