

Reflection Monday 2nd Week Lent 2023

One of the great strengths of the people of the Old Testament was their belief in corporate responsibility. Just as one shared in the acclaim of victories and successes of a people, one also shared in the consequences of their evils and sins. Daniel represented the good people of Israel but also accepted responsibility for their sins.

Lent is a time not just to seek forgiveness for our own sins but for the sins of our families, our parish, our town, our nation. We do that by making amends for the harm caused to the poor, those on the fringes of society, the vulnerable and the vast numbers suffering the consequences of climate change to which we have contributed.

The Catholic catechism states that:

The consequences of original sin and of all the personal sins of humankind put the world as a whole in the sinful condition we experience today. In his Gospel, St John called this "*the sin of the world.*" This expression can also refer to the negative influence exerted on people by communal situations and social structures that are the result of peoples' sins. (408)

Sin turns people into accomplices of one another such that it leads to concupiscence, violence, and injustice that takes root and reigns among them. Sins help create social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. We know them as "Structures of sin" which are a result of our own personal sins. These structures of sin lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute what we know to be a "social sin." (1869)

Wherever sin has perverted the social climate, it is necessary to call for the conversion of hearts and appeal to the grace of God. Charity urges just reforms. There is no solution to the social question apart from the Gospel. (1896).