

Reflection Thursday 4th Week Lent 2023

Pope Francis: *Choose faith in Christ over formalities*

Does the love of Christ crucified and risen again remain at the centre of our daily life as the wellspring of salvation, or are we content with a few religious formalities to salve our consciences?

Are we attached to the precious treasure, to the beauty of the newness of Christ, or do we prefer something that attracts us momentarily but then leaves us empty inside?

The ephemeral often knocks on the door of our days, but it is a sad illusion, which makes us fall into superficiality and prevents us from discerning what is really worth living for.

The foolish are unaware of the danger of losing the valuable treasure, the beauty of the newness of Christ and they may miss the possibility of attaining a new, hitherto un hoped-for freedom.

Even today, people come and harangue us, saying, 'There is no holiness in these precepts rooted in the love of Christ and his resurrection, 'you must do this and that', and propose an inflexible religiosity, the inflexibility that takes away from us that freedom in the Spirit that Christ's redemption gives us.

Despite all the difficulties we may pose to His action, God does not abandon us but rather abides with us in His merciful love.

He is like that father who went up onto the terrace every day to see if his son was returning: the love of the Father never tires of us. Let us ask for the wisdom always to be aware of this reality, and to turn away the fundamentalists who propose to us a life of artificial asceticism, far removed from the resurrection of Christ. Asceticism is necessary, but wise asceticism, not artificial.