

‘Fasting’ Isn’t Just About Food

Then they will fast. Matthew
9:15

Yes, it is the time for us to fast during this holy season of Lent. But God is not primarily concerned about our depriving ourselves of food, unless it will help us to get better control of our lives or protect our well-being from deadly overweight or, more significantly, that our self-deprivation will enable us to help others more generously.



Isaiah tells us clearly the kind of fast the Lord wants of us. First of all, he speaks of releasing those bound unjustly and championing the rights of the poor and oppressed. Then he tells us that the Lord wants us to share our bread with the hungry—something we can do both by immediate practical giving and by seeking to set right the politics of food. Finally, he calls upon us to shelter the oppressed and the homeless—again, we need to do this both by practical immediate assistance to shelters, as well as by working for generous and open immigration laws. Clearly, fasting is much more than depriving ourselves of food and drink; it is something intimately bound up with social justice and charity.

Lord, teach me to see things your way and to have the courage to live that way.

Fr. M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O. as printed in Living Faith

Lenten Commitment

During these forty days of lent, I commit myself to the following:



A distraction I will try to lessen: _

A person I will try to forgive:

A way I will gift my body with a healthy habit:

A way I will rediscover that which has been lost:

A new way of praying:

A new way to discover poverty in my neighbors:

A way to fight for social justice:

Community Lenten Commitment



During this Lenten season, my community and I commit ourselves to the following:

Something we “hunger” for that WE will do with out:

A habit WE will change to preserve the world’s resources:

An action WE can take to fight hunger:

A prayer WE can make for our brothers and sisters who are hungry:

A way WE can challenge ourselves to discover true poverty:

A way WE will simplify our holiday gift-giving:



Faces of Poverty- discussion questions

“I think that the work of the Church in this developed and rich Western Hemisphere is more difficult than in Calcutta, South Yemen, or other areas where the needs of the people are reduced to the clothes needed to ward off the cold, or a dish of rice to curb their hunger—anything that will show them that someone loves them. In the West the problems the people have go much deeper; the problems are in the depths of their hearts”.

Mother Theresa, In My Own Words

Do you agree or disagree with Mother Theresa’s statement? If so, how have you experienced it in your own life, and/or in your service ministry this year?

What new faces of poverty have you seen since you began your service?

What emotions does it evoke when you come face to face with poverty?

Has your witness to the poverty of others resulted in any changes to your own lifestyle? Why or why not?

What role does your faith play in helping you to understand the injustice of the poverty in our world.

Share the story of one person you have served who has served you and had a profound impact on your life.

Share the story of someone you have served beside that inspires you.

Lenten Psalm of Awakening

Come, O Life-giving Creator,
and rattle the door latch
of my slumbering heart.
Awaken me as you breathe upon
a winter-wrapped earth,
gently calling Spring to life.

Awaken in these fortified
of Lenten prayer and discipline
my youthful dream of holiness.
Call me forth from the prison camp
of my numerous past defeats
and my narrow patterns of being
to make my ordinary life extraordinarily alive,
through the passion of my love.

Show to me during these Lenten days
how to take the daily things of life
and by submerging them in the sacred,
to infuse them with a great love
for you, O God, and for others.

Guide me to perform simple acts of love and prayer
the real works of reform and renewal
of this overture to the spring of the Spirit.

O God,
help me not to waste
these precious Lenten days
of my soul's spiritual springtime.

Amen.