**Lent: Resolution or Revolution?**

As a Seminarian I ministered at St. Peter’s in the Loop in downtown Chicago. On Ash Wednesday tens of thousands of people would receive ashes. There were so many they would assemble in long lines that at times extended out of the church and formed around the block leading into the church. Included were many who don’t ordinarily come to Church and wanted to begin Lent right by receiving their ashes. Many resolutions are made. “I will fast on Fridays. I will give up drinking during Lent. I won’t eat chocolate. I will pray more. I will visit those in hospitals, nursing homes or a prison. I will be nice to my spouse.” Often, as on New Year’s, these resolutions are quickly broken, in this case, by the end of the first week of Lent.

We don’t so much need determined resolutions as a *Spirit-led* *revolution!*

It is the Holy Spirit who knows exactly what we need, where we need to change and how to get us there. The first week of Lent we always hear that Jesus was “led,” even *driven*, into the desert by God’s Spirit. It is the same Holy Spirit who takes the initiative with us and must be the driving force behind a significant Lent.

Where do you need to change? Is it in your spiritual life? The Spirit helps us and anoints us to develop something real, close and personal with God. Are you addicted and/or have a sinful habit you need to break? The Spirit comes to make us “holy” and will empower us to face our issues and become free. Do you need a goal or vision or need to give birth to a dream? The Spirit’s role is to give us dreams and visions as well as the passion to accomplish them. Is there someone you need to forgive in order to let go of bitterness and resentment? God’s Spirit will love you into a deep personal surrender so that you can forgive even those who have hurt or despise you.

Lent originally began as a retreat for those who were going to be baptized as well as for those who were joining the Church. The retreat prepared them for Easter. Today we believers accompany them on their journey of 40 days. Retreats are times of prayer, reflection, change and progression. Lent is a season of grace. We can be sure that God will lavish upon us the help we need as we surrender control of our lives to him.

This Lent, don’t so much make a resolution as expect a *revolution*!

Ask to be led and guided by the Holy Spirit. Believe that you will receive wisdom, guidance and power as you journey through these 40 days. Be obedient to what you sense and hear. Change comes suddenly and incrementally. Trust the Spirit of God will be at work in your heart transforming you from within. Because of the Holy Spirit a revolution is about to occur in you. Believe it.

I pray this will be your most significant and growth-filled Lent *ever*!

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