

In her book, “The Way of Perfection”, St. Theresa of Avila wrote, “Let us imagine that within is an extremely rich palace, built entirely of gold and precious stones; in sum, built for a lord such as this. Imagine, too, as is indeed so, that you have a part to play in order for the palace to be so beautiful; for there is no edifice as beautiful as is a soul pure and full of virtues. ...Imagine, also, that in this palace dwells this mighty King who has been gracious enough to become your Father; and that he is seated upon an extremely valuable throne, which is your heart.” (Ch 28:9)

We notice from St. Theresa’s writings that Our Lord has created within us this palace where He desires to dwell...infinite in wealth...our hearts. Unfortunately, what has happened to that beautiful dwelling that God has created for his dwelling has been muddied by sin. Our time of Lent, these 40 days, are when we are given a chance to cleanse our hearts from the stains of our sins....to restore it to its purity...to restore virtue. It is a time where we turn our back to sin and turn our face towards Jesus.

We do this by first marking our foreheads with ashes...a reminder to us that we will one day die and we can take none of our material possessions with us. The next thing that we do is we commit ourselves to the practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These three important practices are the key for turning our back to sin and turning our face to Jesus...to be able to follow Jesus in his journey to Calvary.

But these three things that we do, in the words of Shania Twain, they don’t impress him much. If we do not do these things with the intention to deepen our love for God and in that our love for our neighbour they mean nothing. If we are doing them merely for our own ego...they mean nothing. We become like the hypocrites which Our Lord points out in today’s Gospel.

The heart that Our Lord created us with is to be a heart filled with love...like the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. We notice in their actions that everything that they did, they did for love of God and neighbour. Our Lord never stopped praying for us as he ascended the cross. He was stripped of everything when crucified. He gave everything...every last drop of his precious blood was poured out. Why? Because of his love for us.

It is a heart filled with love that our Lord, the King of Kings, wants to be enthroned on. May this holy season of Lent prepare us and our hearts to be a suitable dwelling for the King...the Son of God, Jesus Christ.