

A LENTEN TALK

“It seems that advent was just the other day when I shared some thoughts with you, and here we are at the beginning of Lent – perhaps it is because I am getting older and it just seems that way! ”

However..... very early one Sunday morning I was driving along Witkopp Road on my way to church. The birds had already woken and their different calls filled the darkness. The eastern horizon was pale and pink but changed every minute as the sun rose higher and little streams of light poured onto the earth around. Tips of the distant hills toward the Magaliesburg were washed in tender colour first, then gradually the light seeped down until the sun rose further and all of a sudden there was bright light everywhere except in the valleys between the hills. In all that brightness there were still little pockets of darkness – bottle green, indigo, violet and grey. As I drove I thought those dark pockets would only become light when the sun was directly overhead, then only would little hidden things be able to be revealed.

How like ourselves I thought. When we commit our lives to Jesus the Son, our new nature is awoken and we are gradually transformed and become aware of those dark pockets within us. As we grow in our journey with Jesus so more and more of his love and forgiveness and grace dispels the dark places of our hearts and minds and we are lifted up, but when we look again, and look more carefully, we see that sadly there are still areas of sin – pockets of darkness in the midst of that. Perhaps wrong attitudes, wrong relationships, wrong thoughts, words, deeds, wrong priorities, wrong motives? Hidden things of the heart that no one sees or knows about except the Son, himself.

When I was first divorced and I was battling in the new and so foreign situation I began to discover “things in my pockets” that I didn’t know were there, it was a shock to find them. Hidden in the depth of my being were anger, resentment, impatience, self pity and a host of other negative emotions that seemed to have developed within my circumstances. I felt so guilty about my feelings because I was so blessed I had so much – 5 supportive children and family yet self loathing lay there too. I had no confidence. My pockets were full of darkness. It made me realise that time and time again we have to come directly to the Son, and empty out our pockets in penitence, thankfulness and humility.

Lent provides a wonderful time for us to respond to the Lord’s call, to open our hearts in response to any interior change the Lord may ask of us. It is a time of challenge, a time to take risks and above all a time for repentance. The Lord may be asking us to free ourselves from any mediocrity or apathy to a movement of the heart that embraces new understandings. We need to, in fact must – get a place where we say to him

“O Lord, Son of Righteousness, shine fully into the dark pockets of my life. Spotlight everything, so that nothing remains hidden, nothing stays in the shadows, either consciously or unconsciously.

Give me courage to face what I see, and power through the Holy Spirit to work with you for change.

I submit to you now Lord, confident that with the scrutiny of your search comes that warmth of your love and wealth of your forgiveness.

So during Lent we can focus our response to the call of the Lord in our own personal lives and as a member of our faith community.

Lord we ask, teach us when to speak, and when to be silent, and not to be afraid of silence but to love it, so that we can hear the thoughts you put in our hearts, and even when there are no thoughts to hear, and our minds are a blank, we can relax quietly in your presence.

Let us take some time now in silence, and then during lent, to see what“ we have in our pockets“.

Father, fill our hearts with love that we can be free to live as you want us to live.

Amen.