

Is Lent a time when we SHRINK our humanity through fasting and prayer?

NO!

Lent is not a season of shrinking as though we were "shrinking violets!"

Rather it is a special time to expand our horizons of love and care.

Our little self denials are not a shrinking, but rather a pruning which allows us to grow anew and flourish in all kinds of human ways. Lent deepens and expands our humanity.

On Ash Wednesday, we are blest with Holy Dirt. It reminds us of our mortality, but it is also dirt into which we can plant new seeds of kindness, generosity, and forgiveness.

Today's Scriptures:

"The Lord God formed man from the clay of the ground...Gen. 2:7

Yes, we are of the earth earthy. To be human is to recognise we are not angels and are not expected to act like angels. We are animals with our feet planted on the earth and our spirits which soar towards the heights.

And Jesus came to us not as an angel, but as human, sharing our earthiness, our sufferings and our joys. So we walk with him through Lent. And along the way we are tempted just as he was.

"At that time, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted." MT 6:3

Lent has always been imaged as a desert time. So by our sacrifices and self denial, we travel through the desert a little lighter, for we too are always tempted by Satan to HAVE MORE!

Our culture demands of us more and more. Our work demands of us more and more.

Americans work harder and longer than all our neighbors in Europe!

And we are we not fascinated by the spirit of Satan who guides the "Wolf of Wall Street" and by Satan's nefarious scheming in "The House of Cards."--I must admit I am. I watch every episode.

Hopefully such entertainment also reveals to us the cleverness of Satan, and reveals to us the false values and even demonic influence that lies behind the greed of Wall Street and the scheming of Kevin Spacey on the Net Flex "House of Cards" series.

Satan always offers "empty promises." So with Jesus in our own Lent, we pray:

"Begone Satan!"

And so we pray in today's Psalm Response:

A clean heart prepare for me O Lord.

And a steadfast spirit renew within me.

Cast me not out from your presence.

And your Holy Spirit take not from me.

Psalm 51

Breakfast Question: What does "Remember you are dust." mean to me?

Personal Reflection: What are the seeds I wish to plant this Lent that will expand my humanity and lead me to new growth and blooming at Easter?