

Reflections:

“Have You Ever Wanted To Change Your Way of Life?”

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Have you ever wanted to change your way of life? Have you ever become so exasperated with your present self that you felt it necessary to do something different, be something different? Perhaps you changed your appearance or treated yourself to something new. But is it possible or helpful to put new wine into old wineskins?

What about an inward change—attitudes, beliefs, how you reveal yourself to other people? Can you willfully change yourself? It isn't easy. Have you ever reflected about the qualities which can make or break an inside change and direct your life toward perfection. In a nutshell, after all, isn't that the meaning of Christian repentance: to change inside first and then to turn toward God, to direct our lives toward Him?

LOVE. We hear a lot about love these days. Love is more than emotion, sex, and “lovins.” St. Paul said, “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right; Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends...” It is thought that St. Paul wrote these words as a description of Christ. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son so that we might live! Christ died for us! Yet if we think about our parents, brothers and sisters, friends, relatives, older people and how we behave toward them, these words of St. Paul already show us whether we have really loved. Have we loved enough to give ourselves to Him or to others? Why is it hard to say, as did the Publican, “O God, be merciful unto me a sinner?”

FASTING. Here we come to the big obstacle for so many people. Why fast? Why give up meat or cheese, dances or movies, TV or other forms of entertainment? Is it simply a matter of “giving up” something? Let's look at it in a different way. Have you ever been on a football, basketball, or track team? Have you ever been in a band, choir, or the debate team? If so, then you know what it means to train, to practice, to be in condition! Exercise, special diets, enough sleep—we'll do it for a team effort, why not for our own salvation? It's really the idea of being able to say to ourselves: “I can control my own body, my appetites, my desires, my actions. I can direct my attention and my life to God! The real point is: How much do I really want God? Is life really important to me, or would I prefer death? Adam and Eve chose death. Is that my choice?”

JOY. We each have our own idea of joy...it may come simply as a smile from a good friend, the sight of someone we really love, the feeling of being trusted, a marvelous day, playing a good game and winning it, a surprise gift. Whatever it is, we'd probably agree that it's a very special feeling, but one difficult to describe. It may not happen often. Life is often a drag, hard work, boring, dull. But a birthday, a celebration, a feast—that can bring it back. Especially EASTER, THE FEAST OF FEASTS. That's

joy! Life! Love! Because it is CHRIST risen from the dead, brining life to all! Then maybe we understand Lent: “Let us being the season of fasting with joy!”