

LENT- A SESSON FOR LOOKING FOR A LOST TREASURE

Have you ever experienced losing something you treasured, or something important in your life? You never notice it is missing until the moment comes to use it, wear it, display it or pass it on to someone else. Then comes the frustration of: “Did I put it somewhere for safekeeping? Did I give it to someone? Did I loan it to someone? Did I carelessly put it somewhere? Was it stolen from me?”

When we were children we played “hide and seek”, deliberately hiding ourselves from others and waiting for them to find us in our secret hiding places. As adults we may still be playing “Hide and seek”, only now we play it with the values and treasures of our lives, hiding or losing them.

Lent is the time we need to find what is missing in our lives. It is the season to deliberately seek what has been misplaced or ignored, so that our lives can once again reflect the Gospel as Christians. Lent is a searching out time and also a means for renewed direction and focus.

If we look closely in our hearts, we will find that we have all lost something we value. We may have lost our patience or our integrity, we may have lost our tempers or our respect for self or for others, we may have lost hope because of the situation we are in or lost our capacity to understand others, or maybe we have lost a friend or perhaps the desire to pray.

Lent is the season to ask: what do I cherish in my life? What or who is that I hide from? Who is it that I seek? Am I aware of what I am missing or misplaced interiorly/in my life? How can I recover or search and find what I hold dear or the treasure of my life?

The Gospel of Luke is filled with images of lost treasures being found. There is the lost son who returns to the arms of the father long waiting for him. There is the shepherd who searches for and who gathers into his arms the lost lamb. And there is the woman who was overjoyed at finding a precious treasure hidden in the field.

We also find in the same Gospel , many people who searched for something dear to them: The blind sought their sight, the woman who bled for 12 years reached out to find her health, the mute yearned to have their speech restored, the woman at the well struggled for her lost integrity, Zacchaeus discovered how much he owed the Lord, the woman who wiped the feet of Jesus found a wonderful depth of forgiveness. Jesus helped all these and more people to recover or find what was missing in their lives.

What is or are the lost treasures of my life that I am seeking? During this lent we are invited to discipline ourselves to pray and bring those lost treasures back home to our hearts and to our lives. But that will only be possible if I recognise the lost treasure of my life. To bring back my lost treasures into my life again takes and needs persistence like the other people in the Gospel. It also takes the longing for the God of light to give me direction in my life. And yet still it takes my openness and my love of the truth about myself, inner life and my life style.

For this time of lent that is left, each of us could decide on some discipline to find our lost treasures. You may choose to spend quality time with your family or community to rediscover the beauty of who they are, or you may give yourself to restoring a broken relationship with a family or community member or a workmate or someone in your life, or you may also give yourself to forgiving someone who has hurt you and that you have written off in your life. Who are

the people I need to restore into my life? What is the behaviour I need to restore into my life that will be life giving and enriching?

What about recovering the great Gospel value of caring for others by not buying something you want, or giving up something (drink, certain foods you like, etc) and give the money to someone you know who is in need and less fortunate than yourself. What about spending some of your time during this time of lent in attending and working for or helping in any other way, a lonely elderly person, or a handicapped person, etc?

As we walk through weeks of lent, may we be the one who hunts in great earnest for the treasure hidden in the field of our individual hearts. And may this Lenten season be a time when each of us re-finds or rediscovers those treasures, values (people, things, behaviours, life styles, etc) which are essential in our lives and especially essential in shaping one's life on the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Christian.

