



## Lent / Carême / Cuaresma 2021

### *Fifth Sunday of Lent*

21<sup>st</sup> March

*“...unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,  
it remains just a grain of wheat;  
but if it dies, it produces much fruit.”*

John 12: 24

During Lent we attempt to live Jesus' experience in the desert and contemplate his way to the cross. We enter into a journey of detachment from self-centeredness and diminishment of the ego. We keep the image of Jesus living the paschal mystery before us to urge us on. Perhaps, it would help us see this journey as one of “*kenosis*” (self-emptying) and “*theosis*” (deification) which is the ultimate meaning of our life and death.

This inner journey is lived out in the context of our culture and society which so often goes contra to the pilgrimage of Christian life. We live in the darkness surrounding our world which also exhibits the seductiveness of human-created society. We see homelessness, poverty, marginalization of the vulnerable, and violence against women and children. This crucifixion of humanity of our time could lead us to contemplate the crucifixion of Jesus.



As Jesus was led by the Spirit, we, too, are to live in the Spirit without whom we can do nothing. We enter deeply into our inner desert, embracing the emptiness of our hearts, and it is in the depth of this emptiness that the Spirit can take hold of us and transform us.

As Dom Henri Le Saux (Abhishiktananda) says:

As he passes from depth to depth in his own heart, the awakened disciple reaches the ultimate depth of the Heart of Jesus... Then, passing beyond all, beyond himself, freed from all bonds, he finally comes to the Source where in his eternal awakening, he discovers that he is.

It is the Spirit we experience in our depths that gives us a new vision of what it is to be human living in the cosmos and sends us on to the mission to help us re-create our world. We are inspired by beauty that is revealed to us by God in his creation and points us towards him.

“The soul that looks up towards God, and conceives that desire for His eternal beauty, constantly experiences an ever-new yearning for that which lies ahead... Hence she never ceases to stretch herself forward to those things that are before, ever passing from her present stage to enter more deeply into the interior...and each newly won grace always seems to be more beautiful than those she has previously enjoyed.”

(Gregory of Nyssa)

We, thus, enter into a profound connection with life with its joys and sufferings, and God’s Spirit leads us to be more fully aware of people’s experiences of socio-political-economic struggles in our countries and in our world. This eventually involves us in struggle for justice which usually includes participation in mechanisms that renew socio-political mechanisms to create a better world for all.

*How do we experience the Spirit present in our lives now?*

*In what way are we called to enter into our “inner desert”?*

This Lent we ask for the courage to embrace the emptiness of our hearts and allow the Spirit to take hold of us and transform us.



*What new vision of the world and call to mission, in and through our different contexts and cultures, does the Spirit invite us to see? How will we respond?*

*How do our spiritual insights find concrete expression in the way we relate with one another; in our care for Earth our common home; and in our concern for the world and suffering humanity?*

Amelia Vasquez rscj  
District of the Philippines

