

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

### **Far More than Bye-Bye to Bon Bons**

Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of a period set aside each year for special self-reflection and repentance [that word means changing mind and direction] in preparation for Holy Week. For some, Lent seems to have to do with giving up some pleasure. This is, in turn, the rationale for an overindulgence in pleasure today. The church we visited last Sunday invited folks to attend a presentation about Fasting-- to be offered immediately following a sumptuous "Coffee Hour". When I went through a tough time 30 years ago, my help came from the Lord through an old 1928 Episcopal Book of Common Prayer that I found in a used bookstore. It gave me the words to pray when I couldn't come up with any on my own. Very good words that helped a lot. During that period, I took to spending time in Roman Catholic churches. The sense of sacred space was very conducive to prayer and reflection. Particularly, I was drawn to meditate on the suffering of a young, 33 year old, man. I connected to him and his suffering in a new way. From that time, I have valued a crucifix. I have some of them, here in my study. Occasionally, I have been ridiculed or even chided, by evangelical Protestants for these "Catholic" things. We believe in the resurrected Christ, they say. Of course. Absolutely! That is Easter ("Resurrection Sunday" )Don't we evangelical Christians also believe in the Blood of Jesus. Didn't many of us flock to watch his flogging, in the movie called Passion of the Christ, ("Passion" means "suffering". ) Don't we testify that we believe he suffered and died for our sins? Don't we, with Paul, preach Christ crucified? Don't we admonish sinners to repent and turn to the Suffering One? And did he not admonish us to pick up our cross and follow him? Are we not to be crucified with Christ?Well, all of that is Lent and Holy Week!

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 10:23