

First Sunday of Lent

February 18, 2024

Repent

The thing about the gospel is that you don't have to be a genius to understand it. It's so simple. Just turn around: repent.

Repentance implies course correction. It doesn't necessitate beating your breast, although that can be a useful ritual if your heart needs a good thumping. Often, course correction doesn't involve how we feel, but rather how we think. Still, I don't recommend hitting yourself over the head. While we can't force ourselves to feel anything, we can reconsider our attitudes, thoughts, and opinions. This allows a new breath to in-spirit us and redirect our behavior. In time, our emotions will catch up.

Jesus tells us the promised kingdom is already at hand. If we want in, we have to turn around. Because the kingdom turns everything around: the last become first, mourners laugh, the poor are blessed, and the dead rise. If we live as if we believe all this, our path will seem peculiar to people around us. Consider a raised eyebrow a good sign!

Alice Camille, *Our Lenten Road to Holiness: Daily Reflections, Prayers and Actions* (Waterford, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2024). Used with permission.

Questions To Ponder:

What is something in your life that you need to change?
How will you go about making that change?

What does the Kingdom of God look like to you? How will you continue to work toward the Kingdom of God as this Lenten Season begins?

Lectio Divina: Read Matthew 1:14-15

Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you begin your Lenten journey?

Challenge for the Week:

As you begin this journey of Lent, create a plan to pray a little differently, give a little more, and share of your gifts a little more generously. Write them here to solidify your plan: