

Invocations of Lent

“What makes the desert beautiful,' said the little prince,
'is that somewhere it hides a well...”

Saint-Exupery ‘The Little Prince’

We *enter* Lent in the Spirit of a long winter:

A cold, frozen time...

consisting of days with the shortest hours of sunlight,
with little signs of life.

We long for Spring - for life... for light...

but are still in the depths of a seeming cold, dark desert.

We are in *waiting* mode.... waiting to be released...

Waiting to live again surrounded by life.

Lent is a fragile time...

Entered into in the spirit of Winter,

a desert-like spirit (*for most*),

...longing for Spring, for Summer.

Lent derives from the old english word *Lencten* - the season of Spring,
a time of natural rebirth,

corresponding to a process of inner spiritual regeneration...

a time of preparing ourselves

to ‘witness’ Christ’s resurrection.

The lenten season is our "spiritual spring.”

This is a time of subdued joy,

a time to use as our personal and communal opportunity

to come closer to the Source of divine joy and life

to come closer to God through Christ.

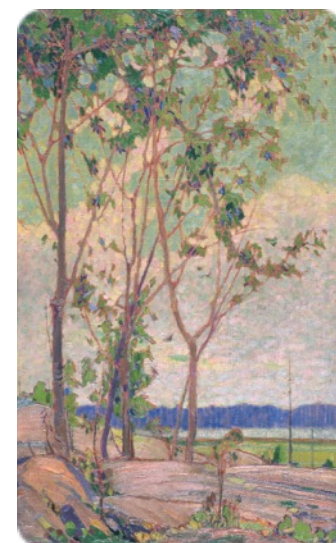
Here is a time to purge ourselves

of the distractions which weigh us down

and prevent us from experiencing the joy

that comes from being in

God's continual presence.



The only things which should cause us sorrow at this time are
those obstacles which we ourselves place on the path to God
and thus impede our journey to Him...
pride, greed, selfishness,
even lack of faith, lack of hope.

Too often Lent has been misunderstood as a time of grim repentance,
but it is meant to be a time of joy,
the joy of a fresh start,
the joy of Spring approaching
the joy of new life coming into being...
greening meadows and blossoming trees and gardens
proclaim a new season.

...a time to fully witness and enter into
this growth of the joy of resurrection...
of Christ's resurrection
and through the resurrection
of the land we walk.



This is a time for hope and growth...
within our human condition.
arising from the lifeless desert of
temptation and deprivation,
arising from the *seeming* nothingness of a seed.

The 40 days of Lent is a time that mirrors Christ's 40 days in the desert,
in which he entered our human condition at its darkest,
to be filled with temptation...
to be moulded in preparation for ministry...
to find spiritual clarity...
to find strength of purpose...
to find the strength to resist further temptation and loss of hope.

Entering the world of the darkness of our soul is never easy.
The desert is that time of pilgrimage,
a journey when our path and destination is not necessarily clear.
Entering the womb of our souls
we may be frightened by what we see.
We will encounter the possibility of darkness
that lies within
...that same temptation experienced by Jesus
in his own desert experience.

But, our tradition tells us that unless we cross the barren desert,
we will never come to really know...
to see and experience the Promised Land
- the land of milk and honey.
We all hold that special place within,
that divine spark.

It will never flame out in faith, hope and love
unless it is matured and quickened
by the 'gift' of the desert.



French writer and pioneering aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
directs our eyes to the stars.

Ensouled, we are carried on the *wind* in bodies of *sand*
and we look up longingly to the *stars*, our homeland.

Sometimes Saint-Exupéry flew without his flying machine...
when lying on his back in the Saharan night,
he felt himself falling upward.

*“When I opened my eyes I saw nothing but
the pool of nocturnal sky,
for I was lying on my back with out-stretched arms,
face to face with that hatchery of stars.
Only half awake, still unaware that those depths were sky,
having no roof between those depths and me,
no branches to screen them,
no root to cling to,
I was seized with vertigo
and felt myself as if flung forth
and plunging downward like a diver.”*



Lent is a time of change:

A change of Seasons.

A change of heart.

Jesus went into the desert to be reconciled and prepared
for the change in his own life about to take place.

Our time of change - within the season of Lent - is symbolized by
a change in forms and colours.

Spring bursts with the shapes and colours of nature.

Our liturgical colours transform from

the black of ash,

to Lenten purple,

to golden Easter.



Lent is a time of vertigo...
to look up into the stars of heaven...
to see our destination,
and to look at our ensouled human condition,
to see the path from which we journey.



Lent is not a joyous time - *in itself*,
but it transforms into joy... it leads to joy.
What starts as a solemn time of
being marked and immersed
with our ensouled nature
is transfigured into the joy of
Christ's resurrection,
...into our resurrection,
of arising out of it...
not beholden by it.

