

Ash Wednesday
Year B

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

2 Corinthians 5: 20b - 6: 10

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

What are our motivations in our worship and in relationship with God? That is the question Jesus is asking us today. "If you practice your piety before others to be seen by them, you have your reward." Jesus says that people who flaunt their religion in public, for the benefit of their audience, are just actors and their performance means nothing to God. Instead, Jesus tells us to show our piety in private, before God alone. Give in secret, not letting your right hand know what the left is doing. Pray in the closet, not on the street corner. Don't advertise your fasting, but clean yourself up, be joyful, and don't talk about it.

The same is true for our Lenten discipline. Whatever you decide to do - whether it is giving something up or taking on a new discipline - that is between you and God. You might ask a trusted friend for advice, but your practice of piety is between you and God. What can you do this Lent to improve your relationship with God? What will draw you into a closer walk with your Creator?

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians gives us all an important clue for our Holy Lent, "be reconciled to God." We should ask ourselves, what is keeping me away from God? Are there roadblocks hindering my walk with Jesus? Am I causing someone else to have difficulties in their relationship with God?

The best way to examine these questions is in prayer. Ask God to help you as you examine your heart. What are your motivations? Seek God in all things and be reconciled to God this Lenten season. This attitude will lead you to the actions and disciplines you might want to undertake this Lent.

This past Sunday the Gospel reading was about the Transfiguration of Jesus. As we look to our relationship with God during this Lenten season, may we be transfigured into the type of person God would have us to be - totally focused on the things of God and not on the things of this world. Let our treasure be stored in heaven today, accessed by us this season, as we seek God's purpose for our lives.