



Raquette Lake Chapel
Ash Wednesday Reflection
February 17, 2021

Do you “Do Lent”?

Many of us have different experiences and memories of Lent. Some of us have never really “done Lent.” Growing up I attended a “high church” and learned Lent was a time of *repenting* (and somberness). I am sure my Sunday school teachers’ admonitions to “repent” did not get through the way they intended. As a youngster I heard: “give something up for Lent.” Chocolate was a common target. And we ate fish on Fridays.

To someone who has never “done Lent” the season’s rituals and purpose of repentance may seem confusing, and so I return to those two Biblical notions of “repenting”:

- First, repent means not just turn away, give something up - it means turn to a better path. When we turn away from (or give up) something, there is a void that must be filled. It is a two-step action: turn away and turn toward. Think of the 12 Step Program for addiction: (1) admit our lives had become unmanageable, and (2) a power greater than ourselves could restore us. Two steps – they go together.
- Second, repent means to consciously and deeply assess our lives, behavior, values, and relationships, and if they have us on a bad path, change them to be as God meant for us. Intentionally or unintentionally, we usually do not see the big picture: we see only what is in front of us. We must look beyond ourselves to change our thinking to develop new perspectives.

So back to “Doing Lent”

For those who follow the church seasons, Lent presents us with an opportunity.... Here’s mine. The amount of divisiveness I see every day is overwhelming, so my self-challenge this Lent is to engage divisiveness differently. This Lent will be a time to consciously turn away from my normal reactions and turn to a better approach. Instead of resisting, I will try to collaborate. Instead of arguing, I will try to listen. Instead of rejecting, I will try to appreciate. (You are more than welcome to join me, by the way!)

My challenge to you?

Join me in turning to a better life. Feel free to email me with your thoughts during Lent – I’d love to hear from you!

- Vance