

Reflection by Sister Lynn Marie Welbig



March 1, 2017

Ash Wednesday

Return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning. Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord your God. Joel 2:12-13

Recently someone remarked, what sense is there in fasting and dying. It is contrary to living and enjoying life.

I doubt if God needs our “dying”, but there is strong evidence that we do. Fasting and dying seem to be the only means to the ‘more’ that God has in store for us, that ‘more’ being a new life-form which is beyond our day to day

business.

This death-to-life is a mysterious design that God has threaded through all of creation, of which we are a part. Be it the disintegration of a star in the universe which, in dying, gives birth to new suns and celestial bodies. Be it metamorphosis; the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly. We see it in grapes to wine; in wheat to bread. A seed gives way to a new plant only by surrendering itself to the earth. Note that none of these changes happen without the (divine) energy that transforms them into new creations. Dying gives way to that recreating energy.

“Anyone who wants to save his life must lose it. Anyone who loses her life will find it.” Mtt. 16:25.

This is the journey of Lent. Prayer, fasting and extra good works are a function of “dying”. It is our self-centered ego, our propensity to wield power that needs to surrender to something deeper. In our intentional sacrifices we yield our ego-space, allowing God to operate there and transform us into new ways of seeing and being. Out of death and dying comes a new life-form that is available in no other way. As transformed persons we more authentically ‘re-present’ God to the world.

Happy dying this Lent.

Jesus, you who did not deem equality with God something to cling to, but emptied yourself... help us to let go of our propensity to be gods of our little universes. Reveal to us personally and communally what needs to give way to your design for our world. Gift us with the gift of surrender that new life may emerge.

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