

# Reflection by Sister Kathleen Bierne



March 5, 2017

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

Psalm 51: 12-13 and Matthew 4: 3-4

“A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your Presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me...”

“If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of Bread.” He said in reply, “It is written, ‘one does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes froth from the mouth of God.’”

Psalm 51 has been part of my life experience since I first entered Presentation Convent. We prayed this psalm following our noon meal as we went 2 X 2 to the chapel. We also pray it as we follow the casket of our sisters as we meet the body for their last homecoming. Consequently, it has become one of those psalms, especially the lines quoted, that became a mantra for me. I find it very helpful to have memorized lines from Scripture, poetry, rote prayer, especially when my prayer appears to be dry, dull and lifeless. As we go about our ministry, do the chores that accompany life, and yes, even sit down to pray, we can use these lines from Psalm 51 to remember that we are always held in God’s Presence, even, and maybe especially, when we are not “trying” to be. God is in charge and the Holy Spirit will not be taken away.

With the coming of Lent, the image presented by Scripture of the time Jesus spent in the desert preparing for his public life, is a challenging one for those of us who are not inclined to much fasting. The picture of Jesus refusing to accept the taunt of changing the stones into bread has special significance for me since I became gluten free thirty years ago. Bread, as I knew it, was no longer an option. I remember thinking that maybe “stones to bread” would have magical ingredients and be acceptable. Alas, no such miracle. However, as those memories flooded in on me in preparing to write this reflection, I have only gratitude in my heart for the ongoing Presence of the Spirit that strengthened Jesus and strengthens us as we minister during these Lenten days. We witness to the daily creation of a “new heart” in us and in those we serve. We have been gifted with the ability to trust that the stones in our lives are often the very bread that sustains us.

Prayer of Abundance, Author Unknown:

From the light of God that we are; From the love of God that we are; From the power of God that we are; From the heart of God that we are; Let us breathe in God’s Presence.