

“Remember you are dust and to dust you will return.”

So we begin the discipline of Lent. It is a discipline, a walk with all our sisters and brothers in the Church. The journey of six weeks is meant to be hard and to get our attention. We have a friend to guide us on this journey. Christ comes to us in his word proclaimed in the Masses of Lent. We pray through Christ that God protect us in our struggle against evil and make this season holy by our self-denial.

We live in a fast-moving world. Today we hear: Stop! Look! And Listen! What is the direction of my life? Am I following in the way of Jesus or have many of my thoughts, desires, and actions moved away from him? The life we live is a wonderful gift from God. We were drawn into the life of Christ through our baptism. Each one of us needs to look at three areas to see how well we follow Christ.

Prayer. Do I pray every day? Do I spend time each day in personal prayer with God? Do I try to pay attention to the Lord when I pray? Maybe I can make more time for prayer and try to do it better. It doesn't take long for us to pick up a bit of clutter as we move along. What are some things I can drop?

Almsgiving. Do I go out of my way to be of help to others? Do I look for opportunities to be of service?

The destination of our Lenten journey is Easter. Easter celebrates new life in Christ. God does not will the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. The life most worth living we are given in baptism. This life does not end in death, but lasts forever.

The crown of life is given to those who undergo discipline and fight the battle of life. The key to success in this battle is found, not in the length of our prayers, the amount of time energy and money we give to the poor nor to the number and quantity of things we give up. The key is found where Jesus points out it is. It is in the heart, where we decide to do what we do, not that others may notice but to please God whose love brought us to life, sustains us every day and calls us home to heaven. A heart that loves knows how to pray, give alms and fast. A heart that loves never forgets the reason why it does these things and whatever else it does, it begs God to make it pure so that love may be the motive behind every thought, word, and action.

Monsignor R.A. Daz