

Ash Wednesday

2-26-2020

INTENTIONALITY

All during my high school years my father told me “The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.” I’m pretty sure he meant that when I intended to do something I needed focus on it, to be really careful not to get distracted by stuff happening around and to me.

Our lessons today are about INTENTIONALLY seeking God. Looking for those Thin Places with Her in the midst of the terrors and fears of THIS world and by INTENTIONAL ACTIONS finding our peace and our freedom from contention and darkness. Of INTENTIONALLY focusing on the Grace we receive from God and not on how many things we have, how much more we can accumulate, or much more right our views are than others. Of INTENTIONALLY being ourselves as we seek to move closer to God, of not caring what others think as we in our hearts and souls seek Thin Places and unity.

As we consider our Christian life and this season of Lent beginning today, we need to think about our INTENTIONALITY for the next seven weeks and how and where we prepare ourselves find our “Thin Places” ...as so beautifully described by Giovan this past Sunday...where we seek to meet God closely.

There is only INTENTIONALITY with God and our relationship, nothing else, just pure Purpose. Think of all the things that happen in the Testaments and in our Spiritual heritage. God is Intentional in ALL of it.

The greatest INTENTIONALITY of all, **God/Jesus on the Cross**...The Thinnest of ALL places. Jesus, once again and as always, showing us that INTENTIONALLY putting himself on the Cross provides the gateway from a world of anger, pride, envy, and hate into a world...led by his Resurrection...of Love and Grace. That by changing our lives, INTENTIONALLY repenting of those things we do to ourselves and to each other by joining God in INTENTIONALITY, we are assured of our resurrection.

WE, as God’s INTENTIONALLY beloved, are called into a season of INTENTIONALITY, into the season of Lent. Lent, when we are invited by INTENTIONALLY and prayerfully and with Community into the “observance of a holy (meaning “separate”) Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, self-denial, by reading and meditation on God’s holy Word.” This is our opportunity INTENTIONALLY to find within ourselves, actively to seek and discover those Thin Places that bring us so near to God. Lent calls us into a life that moves us beyond THIS world. Lent frees us to focus on what’s at the core of our being...God’s Love for us.

May I suggest a few INTENTIONAL things for all of us for this Lent. First, a daily period of prayer. Several of us are going to be doing one of the Daily Offices (Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer) at the same time each day. Although not together physically, we will be INTENTIONALLY in Community and in prayer together. We will be meeting this Sunday to set the time. If you are interested, join us this Sunday.

Consider volunteering with an organization during Lent. It’s the INTENTIONALITY of serving others by accepting the humility that we are all in this life together that’s critical, that we are moved into Thin Places

Be INTENTIONAL with our Sunday services. One of the greatest gifts of our Protestant heritage is the freedom we each have to INTENTIONALLY read and interpret Scripture. With our Protestant DNA in mind, I suggest taking the time to read the lessons for each Sunday BEFORE coming to church or arriving here five or ten minutes early to read them. They are always listed in "What's Happening at St. Christopher's". To reflect, question, discern, and be moved by the Spirit as we read and "inwardly digest" them together. I find it fun to try to figure out what the sermon topic will be and it also gives you the opportunity to ask Giovan or myself about our sermons, helping each of us find new Thin Places.

For one more, before you come to church INTENTIONALLY think of those for whom you want to pray each Sunday, those for whom our Community can pray, BEFORE we get to the Prayers of the People. These are just a few.

Practice being INTENTIONAL. Find something this Lent that will speak to your heart... Whatever it is...something will change your life by "self-examination and repentance" during this "holy Lent..." Be INTENTIONAL in discovering what it is. After all, God's eternal INTENTION...fulfilled for each of us...is to embrace us in Love and Grace.

I pray for each and everyone of you that your INTENTIONAL life this Lent will bring you into Thin Places with God.