The World Community for Christian Meditation

Published on *The World Community for Christian Meditation* (http://www.wccm.org)

Ash Wednesday

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look like the hypocrites..' (Matthew 6:16)

Lent is an opportunity to put our authenticity to the test. It is so easy to slide gradually away from the truth, to imagine a lot but let practice descend into a role-play that we perform as much for ourselves as to make ourselves look better in others? eyes. What a relief it is to get back to our real selves and accept ourselves even when we find we are flawed, unfaithful and generally imperfect. We don?t have to make excuses, just to be honest.

To raise the reality check we are helped by an instrument - which is provided by a special practice we take on during Lent. Prayer, almsgiving and fasting are the traditional categories of spiritual practice.

So to cover all bases, we could begin with prayer. Reinforcing our discipline of meditating twice a day. Refreshing our commitment, straightening our posture. Adding a reading of the day?s gospel. Then giving to those in need? if not materially then in the currency of time or attention or simple acts of kindness. Then fasting ? letting go or reducing what we deep-down know is excessive or illusory or unbalanced.

If we do this practice for the right reason, in the right way, why be gloomy? There?s everything in the right practice to make Lent a time for smiling.

Laurence Freeman OSB

Lent Daily Reflections 2012

Source URL: http://www.wccm.org/content/ash-wednesday-0