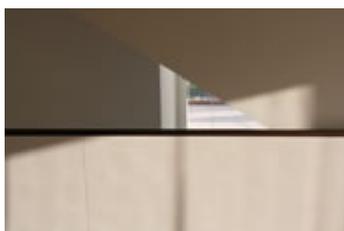


## Wednesday Lent, Week 4



**In the hands** of a good storyteller we love to be strung along. As the tension builds and unexpected twists in the tale occur our pleasure increases. We become absorbed in the story and find it both enjoyable and cathartic. In detective stories the clues and the characters entice us into a page turning kind of addiction. The solution to the mystery becomes increasingly enticing. When we are forced to put it down, we long to get back to the book as soon as possible.

The same enthusiastic absorption gets a grip on newspaper crossword-puzzle enthusiasts. They come to recognize the different personalities who set the puzzles that frustrate and tease them every day. Sitting in front of the last elusive clue that prevents them finishing the puzzle is a bitter-sweet pain.

People have sometimes had a dream in which they experience a total breakthrough into all knowledge. Every puzzle and unanswered question in the universe is answered or resolved and this produces a total peace and serene satisfaction. On waking up, the afterglow of the truth-experience remains powerful but the direct contact with the truth has been broken. Nostalgia for the lost knowledge now becomes acute once they realize they have lost the key to the question that was so fully answered. Gradually even the nostalgia fades until there is barely nostalgia for the nostalgia left. Ordinary, mundane consciousness takes over and covers over the acute feeling of loss.

If only we had the same level of dedication to meditation as we do to thrillers or puzzles we would be ready for the breakthrough we are preparing to engage with again in the paschal mysteries. If only we could reconnect to the forgotten knowledge. The lesson of Lent is that we can.

Laurence Freeman OSB

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