



THE PASTOR'S PEN

February 27, 2107

[Our Lenten Journey](#)

In the case of both Catholics and Protestants many Christian traditions have grown up around the Season of Lent. Over the years one of those widely held traditions is that of fasting and denial. Even today many of us talk about giving up something during Lent. Some stop eating meat. Some give up coffee and caffeine. For others it's chocolate or sweets. That may all be well and good for us physically, but the real intent of Lent is that we should look within. We should change our hearts and not our diets.

Yes, God wants us to change our hearts. God wants a change within. Indeed, the first task of Lent is not fasting, it's not giving up sweets or going off fatty foods. It is repentance. Repentance that brings us before the Lord with penitent, contrite hearts. As the prophet Joel wrote, *"Return to the Lord your God."* Indeed repent and return. Change directions and make a new start. And as Jesus tells us in Matthew 6, do so with out drawing attention to yourself, without making a show of it.

Simply, my friends, as we begin this Season of Lent we are invited to bring our lives, our sins, and lay them before the throne of God. We are directed to come before the Lord with open hearts and make a new start.

And yet, Lent is not only a time of repentance, but also forgiveness. Lent reminds us that God so loved the world that he gave up His Son on a cruel cross for us. That through his death, God grants us forgiveness. Lent tells us that no sin is too little to go without notice, for we have a God who sees what's done in secret. And yet, Lent also tells us that no sin is too great to be forgiven. For we have a God who can see within the heart and who knows the intent of that heart.

There is one more point. Along with repentance and forgiveness, Lent is also a time of renewal. Contrary to popular opinion, Lent is a time of hope, a time of renewal, a time of refreshment. It is a time to turn over our burdens to the Lord, knowing that in Christ, God will receive them in forgiveness and love. Yes, Lent reminds us that there is renewal, it reminds us that there is one who walked a