

## Reflection for Saturday 20 February

Last Saturday I touched on the meaning of Lent and wrote that it is a time for us to respond to God's love to us. It should be the means for us to explore how we can grow further into God's love.

The other day I came across a poem written in 1633 by George Herbert, an Anglican priest and poet. It is called "Lent." Some of you might know it. In it Herbert challenges any negative idea we might have of Lent. The poem begins, "Welcome dear feast of Lent..." Then the poem goes on to extol the benefits of living under the authority of Scripture. Herbert points out that "who goes in the way which Christ has gone, is much more likely to meet him than one who travels the by-ways. Perhaps my God, though he be far before, may turn, and take me by the hand, and more may strengthen my decays."

Herbert is telling us that the best way to observe Lent is to look upon it as our walking in the way of Christ in his temptation and fast and, as we are walking in Christ's way, we shall surely meet him and he will bring us closer to himself. In all his actions and teaching Jesus showed us how much God loves us. We now in this time of Lent discover how we can with his grace put that love into action in our own lives.

We use the Lenten tools of prayer, fasting and almsgiving as the means of allowing us to grow more into God's love. Prayer helps us to discover more about ourselves and enables us to establish new patterns of life, new priorities which God may reveal to us as we meet him in our time of prayer. Fasting makes us more thankful to God for all the things we deny ourselves. Almsgiving brings us closer to those sisters and brothers who are deprived of the good things we take for granted. In so doing God brings us more into his love.

If we approach Lent in this way it will be a time of joy in wanting to walk in the way of the Lord Jesus, culminating in being closer to Christ in his passion and death. Our joy will be crowned by him as we meet him in our Communion with him at Easter.

Have a wonderful and happy feast of Lent and May God richly bless you as you walk in the way of Christ.