

## Weekly Readings 24/2/2013



An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, *Reflections, Lent*

2008, pp. 2-3, [www.wccm.org](http://www.wccm.org).

Lent is a time when we refine and purify the spiritual senses and identify the habits or patterns that pollute them. The means of doing this are the exercises we undertake in this season.

It is not a time for self-punishment or repression. Today especially the human psyche is too fragile for that. But when a friend summons up the courage to tell you something you would rather not hear, some exposure of a fault or dishonesty you have been guilty of, do you not (in the end) feel gratitude for their expression of love and concern for you? It is not condemnation but *repentance* that works to accelerate the spiritual journey. To repent means not to feel guilty which is a waste of time and spirit. It means to be honest, clear-sighted and courageous enough to change direction.

Before changing direction it is best to pause. Lent is a time above all to give more time than we normally think we can afford to the mechanics of our spiritual life. It is not only about giving up but doing something more or less. Sometimes the two can be nicely balanced: less time watching television, more time readings, going earlier to bed, getting up earlier to meditate, listening to the news just once a day, praying the hours more often, eating less and better, living and communicating more healthily.

Of course, good intentions are more likely to be sustained when they are realistic. It is better to slow down gradually before changing direction or you may simply go into a spin. The aim of Lenten discipline is to reverse the momentum of actual or implicit self-rejection and to allow the experience of knowing that we are loved to arise and envelop us. This knowledge (however it comes to us) is in fact the *knowledge of God*. The changing of momentum is stillness. Thus,

Be still and know that I am God (Ps. 39)

**After meditation: an excerpt from William Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. 2 (New York: Norton, 1979) p. 156.**

That blessed mood,  
In which the burthen of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened?that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on?  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul;  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.

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Weekly Readings Newsletter

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