

Ash Wednesday, 2021

[17 February 2021](#)

A couple of years ago,  
I preached about this word... I don't expect you to remember this at all...  
but it is a word that hasn't left me since  
we have been affected by this pandemic for almost a year now.  
The word is Compunction.

This is one of the last things that we pray for  
at this Ash Wednesday Mass.  
The final blessing at the end of this Mass  
we will ask God to send us a "Spirit of Compunction"  
in this time of Lent.

Now what does the word mean?  
Well, it comes from the Latin,  
meaning "to puncture."  
So if I were to puncture, say a, basketball or football,  
it would not only be punctured...  
but it would also begin to deflate.  
If I were to puncture a balloon,  
it would not only deflate but it would burst.

This is what a Spirit of Compunction is and does...  
this is what we ask God to do for us in Lent...  
Deflate us.  
Burst our bubble.  
Because it may be true for some of us  
that we think a lot of ourselves.  
We let our egos get the better of us.  
We sometimes may even get into this attitude of  
"I don't need anyone else."  
"I can do it all on my own." "I know what's best"  
or the buzz phrase of the day, "I know my truth." Really?  
Lent is a time for those attitudes to be deflated,  
and to say we do need someone,  
because sometimes ... many times, we get it wrong...  
and we need someone who gets it right.  
Lent is a time to say: I need Jesus.

Compunction...Lent is a time to deflate  
those attitudes that say I know what I need to make me happy  
and fulfilled...  
I need to be more physically fit,  
I need a better relationship,  
I need to cast away the traditions of the past,  
I need to be more footloose and fancy free...  
and Lent is a time that deflates all this  
and sows the seed of fulfillment in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving  
Lent shows us who to turn to for happiness, fulfillment, and peace.  
Lent helps us to know who it is we really need: I need Jesus.

Compunction...Lent is a time to deflate  
those attitudes of entitlement.  
I deserve this and I deserve that.  
I don't have to listen to anyone.  
I can do whatever I want, whenever I want.  
I don't have to take responsibility for my actions.  
Lent is a time to deflate those attitudes  
and to know that we are all sinners...  
none of us are worthy ... certainly not worthy to have Jesus enter under our roof...  
we don't deserve anything - but everything is pure gift from God.  
And because everything is a gift...how grateful we should be.  
Lent is a time that helps us to gratefully say...  
I need Jesus.

Compunction...it means ultimately that we can't do anything on our own...  
we need Jesus...  
who reminds us to pray more...to suffer/sacrifice more...to help more  
especially in this Lenten Season.

May these ashes that we bless  
deflate us... burst our bubble even,  
so that we can freely acknowledge and admit what we truly need...  
We need a Savior... we need him...  
we need Jesus.