



Do we really need Lent? Don't we make ourselves miserable enough as it is? Hold on, maybe we have the whole concept twisted.

Lent originally started as the time when people wanting to follow in the Way of Jesus were instructed on what it meant. They were accepted into the community of followers at the end of Lent — Easter. But in the Middle Ages Lent became mixed up with the monastic period of fasting and penance between Epiphany (January 6) and Easter. Fasting was also a practical solution to the very limited food supplies in monasteries at that time of year! In any event, Lent became a penitential season and remained so until fairly recent times when alternatives have been breaking through which, I think, would have been more to Jesus' liking.

This is a good time of year to make our lives more spiritually healthy. That will mean many different things for different people. Some practices are very simple. For example, with all our WI-FI technology it is getting harder to “unplug” from the world and experience the quiet facets of life. So, following the suggestions of author William Powers’ for what he calls “Walden Zones” in our lives, “Walden Baskets” for cell phones have been popping up here at Starcross. It feels good to drop my phone into a basket when I leave the house and walk to the chapel or greenhouse. For those of us who grew up in a Catholic tradition it is sort of like dipping our fingers in the holy water and making the sign of the cross before entering a place of prayer. (That practice sometimes included flipping the water in the face of the person behind you if the nun was not looking your way!)

But some routes to a healthier life are much more complicated than the “Walden Basket” — as well you know.

Two weeks ago I drew attention to the commemoration of the Liberation of Auschwitz in 1945. I also admitted to a growing feeling of frustration as I age. If you can’t recall the reflection here is a link to it on our website

[http://starcross.org/pdfs/reflections\\_2013-01-25\\_fountain.pdf](http://starcross.org/pdfs/reflections_2013-01-25_fountain.pdf)

There was a surprisingly large response to that reflection. In one way or another it touched a nerve with many people. Everyone agreed we can’t forget the evils of the past. I don’t like that word “evil” but I can’t think of a better term for Auschwitz or Newtown. But then what? How do we process these tragic experiences? That is

where the wisdom of your many responses come in. As a way toward making this world a healthier place, I would like to spend part of this Lenten season with you in exploring some thoughts you have shared with me.

Recently I attended a memorial gathering where a large extended family was coming together after a young person's death. There were people of every age there and I realized how important it is to understand that each one of us lives between the generations who have gone before us and those yet to come. We each do really makes a difference. And, therein lies our hope.

Albert Camus (1913–1960) pointed out in *The Artist And His Time* that everyone of us stands between “the crudest implications of history” and the future. Our hope for that future is based on “the sufferings and joys of millions of solitary individuals.” Each of us “builds for all.”

***Brother Toby***