

Reflection for the 8th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Today is March 2, 2025, and we are just three days away from the start of the Season of Lent. Three more days and we find ourselves celebrating Ash Wednesday, the start of the 40 days of Lent. I remember as a child waiting for something to happen, just filled with anticipation of when the time would arrive or when we would arrive at the destination. When I was a child growing up in Albuquerque, my family would often go to a campsite that we call Big Rock. The campsite had a different official name, but we called it Big Rock, because there was a big rock near the campsite. We would go to the campsite at any time of the year, summer or winter. I remember one time when we spent a good week there in the Summer. Near the campsite there was a creek that one could fish in. Early one morning I went out fishing and returned to the campsite not with fish but with a handful of berries. Later in the day, my Mom asked me if there were many berries in the area and I told her there were. So, she gave me a bowl and asked me to pick as many berries as I could because she wanted to make a pie with them. Throughout that week at the Big Rock campsite, I picked as many berries as I could each morning and my Mom baked pies and other treats that she shared with everyone that was camping in the area. Looking back on this experience I had great expectations of what would take place at the campsite we went to so often when I was a child, but that one summer outing was so different from what I could have expected. The fishing and taking walks in the forest were still a part of the experience. The gathering of berries and sharing the pies and other treats added a whole new dimension to the experience. The camping trips that we normally had at Big Rock were a time to be with family, the pies and other treats my Mom shared with the other campers dramatically changed our camping experience at Big Rock in a very positive way. We wound up spending a great deal of time with other campers and the experience was wonderful. This new dimension could not have been anticipated.

So, this brings us back to the fact that in three days we celebrate Ash Wednesday and begin our Lenten Journey. We as people of faith have taken this journey every year, and we can have expectations of what we will encounter and experience. Be it the Thursday Lenten Soup Suppers, or the Friday Stations of the Cross, and we cannot forget the Friday Lenten Fish Fry. Are we willing to allow this year to be different than every previous Lenten Season we have experienced. I am not saying there was anything wrong with what you have experienced in Lent in the past, but this year our God might have a different experience planned for you. This different experience that God has for you might happen in your normal Lenten events, or it might be something different and new. Please note that I am not saying that you should do something new or different, but rather I am suggesting that we should all be open to this Lent providing us something new that will change our lives.

This Sunday the last Sunday before we enter the Lenten Season, in our Gospel Reading we hear of Jesus sharing a parable with His disciples. In this parable we hear about what our limitations can be, if we are blind how can we guide another blind person? If we have a wooden beam in our own eyes, how can we help someone remove the splinter from their eye? We need to be transformed before we try to help others. It is something new or different in the Season of Lent that can enable us to be transformed. This thing in Lent that can transform or change us has always been in the Lenten Season. Just like the berries had been in the Forest, it just had not been the right time for me to encounter them until that one Summer that changed everything. Once we are ready for the beam to be removed from our own eyes, then this thing we have not encountered in the Lenten Season but has always been there will be discovered by us and the Season of Lent will take on a whole new meaning for us. The 40 days of Lent is a Season of prayer, fast, and abstinence. This Season is meant to prepare us for the most holy week of the year, the celebration of the death and resurrection of our Savior. This Season clearly is meant to be a time of change and transformation, so may each one of us in these 40 days embrace the opportunity we have to be forever changed by this 40-day journey.