

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Mar 12th 2013

As I am writing this we are early in Lent, with a considerable snowstorm here in Omaha. As you read this, we will be on the downhill run to Easter and I'm hoping the snow has melted.

I confess to having a perpetually ambiguous relationship with Lent. At least here in the Northern Hemisphere, it begins in the lonely days of winter, and the thought of making sacrifices besides those imposed on us by our climate has never been an easy thing for me. But then again the relatively trivial dietary restrictions I impose on myself are a tiny sacrifice next to the suffering much of the world endures, so I feel petty for complaining, even silently to myself.

Much of my difficulty comes from viewing Lent in negative terms. I'm NOT doing this and I'm NOT doing that. It helped me some years ago when a Jesuit friend of mine told me that Lent is a word for spring. (Of course, again, only those of us in the Northern Hemisphere can take that literally, as south of the equator you're in the tail end of summer and heading towards early fall.) But the notion of spring helped me to think of it as a chance to prepare my soul and spirit like tilling the earth for planting. Each Easter is a perpetual victory over death as we are restored and the green shoots of rejuvenation poke up from the ground in search of the sunlight above.

So if you haven't had a "good" Lent so far, it's never too late. It's never too late to prepare for the joy of Easter through, yes, the joy of Lent

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