

“Transformed By Love”



Be Not Conformed To This World

Talk #1

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Our Inner Room

Lent, then, immerses us in a bath of purification and of self-spoliation: it helps us to remove all the cosmetics that we use in order to appear presentable, better than we really are. To return to the heart means to go back to our true self and to present it just as it is, naked and defenceless, in the sight of God. It means looking within ourselves and acknowledging our real identity, removing the masks we so often wear, slowing the frantic pace of our lives and embracing life and the truth of who we are. Life is not a play; Lent invites us to come down from the stage and return to the heart, to the reality of who we are: a return to the heart and the truth.

(Pope Francis — Homily Ash Wednesday Mass (February 14, 2024))

Reflections

- The devil loves busyness and lack of focus. We need to discover that “secret” place where we encounter the Lord and His love and mercy. This is what sets us apart from being an activist to being a disciple.
- We are the only ones who can share the Gospel with people who haven't heard it. Think about the joy we bring to the Lord when we help a soul out of the oppressive clutches of the devil and into the loving arms of Jesus! The Church is not just some social organization trying to make a better world. It is the living Body of Christ with a specific mission to reconcile people to the Father through Jesus Christ and to break down the walls of hostility. (Next slide)

EPHESIANS 2:14–22

EPHESIANS

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Conformity To Christ—Not The World

- We can't run away from the challenges we are facing and pretend that means being not conformed to the world. (The Door Prophecy, Elijah & The Broom Tree, Daniel)
- The Holy Spirit will teach us and show us how to adapt without compromising our faith. The Saints show us this in the most powerful ways. (St. Josephine Bahkita, Servant of God Élisabeth Leseur, St. Monica)
- Their strength was their interior life — their ability to go into their inner room.
- The world seeks to victimize, demonize, and spread divisions. Jesus came to heal and bring together. (The difference between secular optimism and Christian hope)

1 JOHN 3:1–3

1 JOHN

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

JOHN 17:15–19

JOHN

I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Back To The Heart

Let us listen then, throughout this Lent, to the voice of the Lord who does not tire of repeating: go to your room, return to your heart. It is a salutary invitation for us, who so often live on the surface of things, who are so concerned to be noticed, who constantly need to be admired and appreciated. Without realizing it, we find ourselves no longer having an “inner chamber” in which we can stop and care for ourselves, immersed as we are in a world in which everything, including our emotions and deepest feelings, has to become “social” – but how can something be “social” that does not come from the heart? Even the most tragic and painful experiences risk not having a quiet place where they can be kept. Everything has to be exposed, shown off, fed to the gossip-mill of the moment. But the Lord says to us: Enter into the secret, return to the centre of yourself. Precisely there, where so many fears, feelings of guilt and sin are lurking, precisely there the Lord has descended in order to heal and cleanse you. Let us enter into our inner chamber: there the Lord dwells, there our frailty is accepted and we are loved unconditionally.

Do We Believe?

Let us return, brothers and sisters. Let us return to God with all our heart. During these weeks of Lent, let us make space for the prayer of silent adoration, in which we experience the presence of the Lord, like Moses, like Elijah, like Mary, like Jesus. Have we noticed that we have lost the sense of worship? Let us return to worship. Let us lend the ear of our hearts to the One who, in silence, wants to say to us: “I am your God – the God of mercy and compassion, the God of pardon and love, the God of tenderness and care... Do not judge yourself. Do not condemn yourself. Do not reject yourself. Let my love touch the deepest, most hidden corners of your heart and reveal to you your own beauty, a beauty that you have lost sight of, but will become visible to you again in the light of my mercy.” The Lord is calling us: “Come, let me wipe your tears, and let my mouth come close to your ear and say to you: I love you, I love you, I love you” (H. NOUWEN, *The Road to Daybreak*, New York, 1988, 157-158). Do we believe that the Lord loves us, that the Lord loves me?

In Summary

- Not being conformed means looking inward and opening ourselves to the marvelous process of being transformed in God's love so we can see the world as God sees it.
- Trusting the mercy of God and His desire to perfect us in His love and grace and to cooperate with His plan of salvation for the world.
- Relating to people in their brokenness but also calling them to faith, repentance, and healing from trauma and sin. (My "Vancouver" experience, St. Damian of Molokai.
- Being aware of the lies of the Enemy and renouncing them.

“The Power of Your Love”

Travis Cottrell

CHORUS:

The power of Your love is
changing me

Changing me, changing
me

O Lord, change me by
the power of Your love

VERSE 1:

You've drawn me to Your
side

And what else can I do

My heart is open wide

My hands reach up to
You

VERSE 2:

I'm calling out for more
I'm asking in Your Name
That by Your Spirit, Lord
I will never be the same

BRIDGE:

I'm singing out my praise

I'm pouring out my
thanks

For the power of Your
love

Is changing me

I'm lifting up my voice
I'm dancing in the joy

For the power of Your
love

Is changing me