



***I am constant in my affection for you (Jeremiah;31:3)***

*"..We have worked all night long, but we have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.." (Luke; 5:5)*

The season of Lent begins today with Ash Wednesday when we are reminded of our frailty as human persons and yet, wonderfully created by God and loved unconditionally (*"I have loved you with an everlasting love;...I am constant in my affection for you"* (Jeremiah;31:3). This is a time for us to quietly reflect on where we have been, where we are and where we plan and hope to be. It is a time to thank God for carrying us gently and lovingly despite our failings. It is a time not to beat our chests in shame but in wonder and awe rejoicing that despite our human frailty God has never given up on us.

If God is so loving, caring and patient with us even when we make decisions that harm and kill the very body created in God's image and likeness (Genesis; 1:26-27) destroy *the earth* that is *God's footstool* (Isaiah;66:1), who am I that I should turn my back on my brother and sister, refuse to extend my hand of help and friendship, close my doors and gates denying them the warmth and friendship, demonize and label 'them' as 'traitors', 'thieves', 'foreigners', 'strangers', enemies? Lent is the time for us to reflect on this question and others that call on us to reflect on our lives and our failure to love others until it hurts. This is a time to ask for the grace that we need so that we can open our hearts to God. This is because God is the only one who feels our heart beat when it is moving fast or slow, when it is hurting or joyful, when it is full of conceit or humility. God who indeed sees our hearts and has the power to heal and change us, cleanse us as the ten lepers that were healed and set us free.

Let us, therefore, take this time of lent as a time to trust in the God of miracles despite our working not only 'all night fishing' for whatever we believe will make us, our families, communities, nations happy, but like Peter, in faith, '*let down the nets*' (Luke;5:5) to allow God transform and fill our nets (our hearts) with true happiness which is exemplified in our ability to love, to be merciful and compassionate, just and peaceful. May God recreate a new spirit so that at the end of this journey of lent that we have begun, 'Alleluia' will not only be our song but also, that our lives will be so transformed that we will walk in the path of the one who was 'unarmed' and 'disarming' (Pope Leo XIV) His 'enemies' through the ultimate act of love on the cross at Calvary and resurrected so that we "*may have life, and have it to the full* (John;10:10). May this Lenten season be a time of reflection, renewal and special blessings for you all, your families, communities, nations and our global world .

God, Our Creator, who promises hope, restoration and fresh start when you declare, "*I am doing a new thing* (Isaiah, 43:19), come journey with us anew. Amen.

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