

Devotion – Week of March 6, 2022—First Week of Lent

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

As we begin this season of Lent, I will be sharing devotions from Henri Nouwen, the world renowned spiritual writer. He was a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian. He taught at the University of Notre Dame, Yale Divinity School and Harvard Divinity School. I find his writings to be meaningful and healing.

Thoughts from Henri Nouwen:

Jesus said, “The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them...The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” *Matthew 9:15*

In Lent, we rejoice in the presence of Christ, but also know that we will soon mourn his death. We are reminded that in the midst of pain, there is a strange, shocking, yet very surprising voice. It is the voice of the One who says, “Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted.” That’s the unexpected news: there is a blessing hidden in our grief. Somehow in the midst of our tears, a gift is hidden.

One of the greatest paradoxes of Christianity is constantly revealed to us in the season of Lent – through suffering, we find salvation. This is revealed to us most vividly in the cross of Christ. But any honest assessment of our own lives reveals the pain and sadness that may occur before we find God waiting on the other side.

Often, whatever causes our sadness also brings with it a profound sense of loneliness and alienation. We wonder where God is in our grief. He’s on the other side of sadness, waiting for us – we just have to go meet him. This is good news because we can be confident that God wants to comfort us, wants to bless us.

May this week be one of reflection and thankfulness for the constant presence of God.

Jeanne