



Ad Clerum

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LENT 2022 – QUO VADIS?



Quo Vadis is a Latin phrase which means, “*whither goest thou?*” or, “*where are you going/marching?*”

The phrase comes from a legend about the ending of the life of St Peter and a vision he was purported to have seen. Fleeing along the Appian Way, from persecution and certain death in Rome, St Peter met the risen Christ, heading in the opposite direction and bearing His Cross. Astonished, Peter asked the Lord. “*Domine, Quo Vadis?*” or, Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied (in Peter’s vision) that He was heading for Rome to be crucified a second time. Peter realized that his flight from Rome was cowardly, and he returned to Rome to face whatever persecution awaited him.....an interesting legend.

I also face a meeting with Jesus and perhaps this time, the words on His lips will be “*Michael, quo vadis?*”, and I will have to answer and tell my Saviour that I am *trying* to follow in His steps, and *trying* to live a holier life, and *trying* to be a better Christian....always *trying*, and never quite getting it right? Embarrassing, Michael, as a very imperfect *me* faces a perfect Saviour....this brings me to Lent 2022.

LENT 2022

The pull of the world is very strong, and we are so easily distracted, so easily tempted. Too many Christians are forever *trying*, but never gaining mastery over the 'world, the flesh and the devil' – over ourselves. Lent 2022 is to be a turning point in our journey of faith – no more excuses, no more feeble justifications for our shortcomings. It is time, like Peter, to turn around from our own path, and courageously follow the path that God has called us to walk in....to whatever end that may lead us.



The simple illustration above gives us the keys to mastery of ourselves and to a blessed and holy Lent. **Prayer, Fasting, and Works of Love** are the paving stones of a successful Lenten journey, as individuals and as parish groups.

We, as the Christians of the Traditional Anglican Church are to be known, not for our social activism (although that is a part of our humble Works of Love), nor for our political correctness or our liberal policies, but for a few simple things:

1. The TAC is to be known as a focussed and **Praying community** – for each other and for the country and the world
2. The TAC is to be known as a **Disciplined and HOLY community**, one that eschews all that is evil and cleaves to all that is good.
3. The TAC is to be known as a **community that supports those who are in need** and does so, not to gain publicity, but rather in humble obedience to the commandment "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*"

If we are a community that does these things, and does not only *think* about them, we will also be fulfilling the Lenten vision of a **praying, fasting and merciful church**.

EPIPHANY – SEEKING A VISION FROM GOD ?

All of us seek a deeper relationship with God, and all of us ache to hear God's voice or have some special revelation or vision from God to help us govern our lives and be more fulfilled in our Christian discipleship.

How will this come to pass?

I am going to give you a Scripture to read, and I hope that you will understand it's secret. It comes from the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (SAPB p80) St Luke, Chapter 2.

²⁵ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. ²⁶ And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, ²⁸ Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:³⁰ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, ³¹ Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; ³² A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

³⁶ And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷ And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. ³⁸ And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.



Notice a few key things from this holy Feast:

- In the life of Mary and Joseph – humble obedience and acceptance of God's will brought them to the right place at exactly the right time....they were amazed and grateful.
- Simeon hears the voice of God very clearly because he was "*just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.*" Work at being just and devout and seek God's face, and the Lord's vision will be clear to you and you will be satisfied.
- Anna had to exercise great patience before God spoke into her life. She was very old when she came into the Temple and finally saw Jesus. We are told that she "*departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day*" No short cuts for Anna – just a life of Godly discipline...but what an ending, to see the Lord's Christ!

FASTING, PRAYER AND THE GIVING OF ALMS

These are our Lenten duties. Without these basic activities, there can simply be no progress in the life of the earnest Christian disciple.

The 'spectacular' gifts....the signs and wonders that so many people urgently seek, are not possible unless the foundations of a disciplined Christian life have been laid. We are to keep our Faith deep and simple.

Even Jesus went into the wilderness before His dynamic and explosive ministry began. This Lent we should do our best to withdraw from the world and seek the Way of God for our lives. It will be an interesting experience for us that challenges our so-called independence and makes us more dependent on His Word and Sacrament.

All of this comes down to the taming of our appetites.

Fasting is too often thought of in terms of food? What about abstinence in other areas of life that are equally addictive? What about self-discipline and the simplifying of words and actions...abstaining from hurtful words and deeds? What about our computers and our phones...hours of wasted time looking, or '*searching*' for things that are of no lasting value.....time that could be spent in the study of Holy Scripture and in Prayer to God our Maker; searching for God's presence and guidance?



St Anthony of Egypt, the founder of Christian monasticism, urged Christians to withdraw from the world and engage in the fiercest battle of all – the battle for their own soul. He taught that in solitude, the fight of faith within would be won, and the devil defeated...in simplicity, the voice of God would be heard, and His peace finally found.... I suggest that we follow his teaching.

I wish you a holy and blessed Lent. Keep it simple, and don't be soft on sin in your life!

In Christ Jesus our Lord
+Michael
TAC Africa