

A BROKEN VIOLIN AND LENT



In 1981, Peter Cropper, the famed British violinist (he died in June of 2015), was invited to Finland to play at a special concert. As a personal favor to Peter, The Royal Academy of Music lent their priceless 258 year-old Stradivarius violin for use in the concert. This exceptionally crafted violin is renowned for the quality of its sound.

When Peter got to Finland an incredible nightmare took place. Going on stage, Peter tripped and fell. The violin broke into a number of pieces. After the concert, Peter flew back to London in a state of shock. He sought out a master craftsman, Charles Beare, who agreed to try and repair the violin. He worked endless hours on it. Finally, he got it back together.

Then came the dreadful moment of truth. What would the violin sound like? Beare handed the violin to Peter. Peter's heart was pounding inside of him as he picked up the bow and began to play. Those who were present could hardly believe their ears. Not only was the violin's sound excellent, but it actually sounded better than before.

The violin can be a metaphor for our lives. At times our lives go to pieces; or at a minimum, the harmony of our lives is out of tune. Lent is an opportunity to allow the divine Master Craftsman to repair and tune the violin of our lives.

On Ash Wednesday, the church reminds us of the three traditional practices of Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I would like to suggest a deeper understanding of these practices.

Prayer is not merely saying words. Prayer should be reflective. Reflection is about thinking about the meaning of the words we pray or read. Silence is an important part of prayer. What is more important that God hear us (remember, he already knows) or that we hear God. In silence, we hear God who speaks through our thoughts and feelings. What can I do to make my prayer **MORE REFLECTIVE THIS LENT**.

Often, we think of fasting as giving up food or drink – like candy and beer. There is nothing wrong with this. However, there is deeper kind of fasting - the fasting from doing what is wrong. Ask yourself, “**WHAT AM I DOING THAT I SHOULD NOT BE DOING?**” (Could it be: being

unkind or nasty or negative or demeaning, watching pornography.) I am sure you can find something. Why not fast from this inappropriate behavior. Become the more you can be.

Often, when we think of almsgiving we think of financial contributions to good causes or to people in need. Certainly, this is worthwhile. We can think about almsgiving in another way. Ask yourself the question, “WHAT AM I NOT DOING THAT I SHOULD BE DOING?” Is there someone I need to reach out to? Is there someone I need to help? Is there someone I need to forgive? What can I do to be a better spouse, parent or friend?

The violin of our life may be broken or out of tune, but there is a Master Craftsman who wishes and can heal us. Perhaps, considering these three questions will open your hearts and minds to THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN.

What can I do to make my prayer more reflective?

What am I doing that I should not be doing?

What am I not doing that I should be doing?

Msgr. Gene 2018