

After our last leadership meeting I received a telephone call from a colleague concerned about a weight problem. The call, its urgency and sincerity stirred within me a call to consider my own condition in the realm of the physical in union with the spiritual. The voice within me said, "You also weigh too much, and you could do more for yourself and perhaps your colleagues." In response I share with you these thoughts.

Lent is upon us. It is a time for spiritual refocussing and traditionally a time for discipline of the physical. In our self-examination perhaps we ought to ask some pertinent questions about our care of the temple in which Christ resides. Could we improve our effectiveness for Him by improving our care of His temple? Have our habits caused its premature deterioration? Does getting down on one's knees seem too unreasonable since getting up may require divine intervention or a derrick? Does the last hymn before the sermon leave you too winded to begin the scripture without a few moments of silent meditation for respiration? I think you catch my drift here, but let's go on.

Lent is also a time for cranked up schedules. You know this as well as I, and this chaos can take a real toll. By the time Easter comes most of us will need a personal resurrection of sorts to find a moment of worship for our own parched souls.

Easter is coming. Graciously it is late this year, but it is coming. We all look forward to THE SUNDAY and its accompanying attendance including new faces or at least faces not seen since last Easter. If only we could say something that would reach their souls and bring them back the following weeks to fellowship with the risen Christ! What would it be? What can I say? The questions echo through the mind and echo raises the internal pressure we feel. The knowledge of an impossible task and too much to do builds a huge agenda which demands more effort, more office time, more meetings, more arrangements, more exegesis, more searching for just the right illustrations, more, more, more, . . .

The result of it all is spiritual exhaustion and often dietary indiscretions followed by the shrinking of clothing which follows. I don't believe this was what Jesus had in mind when He offered us an "abundant life." Too much to do and too much to eat doesn't fit the context.

My proposal: a Lenten Labyrinth. Your question: What's Young up to now?

Labyrinths as used in Christian tradition are basically prayer walks which are symbolic of our walk with God. They have been used by seekers for centuries and they adorn the floors of many cathedrals. They are not mazes although at first glance they appear to be. A labyrinth has one entry to a path which leads to the center and back out. The path must be walked carefully and intentionally. The walker must take time to leave the world and walk prayerfully toward the center as he converses with and listen for God. Refreshed and revitalized from this encounter one returns to serve God in the world.

Most of us don't have access to a labyrinth, but this is my plan. I propose a symbolic labyrinth calling us from the world to that "place of calm repose." Over the next 6 weeks you will receive weekly communications from the Keeper of the Labyrinth. These messages will be reminders for you to take care of the temple both physically and spiritually. They will encourage you to do some very simple things in terms of the physical and they will provide fodder for meditation and prayer.

Enclosed with this explanation is the first installment which is much longer than the usual. I urge you to take time to enter the labyrinth.

Yours on the journey,
The Keeper of the Labyrinth