

CHARITY IS THE HEART OF SPIRITUALITY: FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY, 2021

ISAIAH 58:1-9; PSALM 51; MATTHEW 9:14-15

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are three spiritual exercises that we are encouraged to especially practise during this season of Lent.

The first reading and the gospel of today invite us to reflect on fasting or better still, the place of charity in fasting.

In the first reading, we have the protest of the people of God against God. They protested that He didn't notice or accept their fasting.

On the surface, it seemed that they loved God and were devoted to Him. They looked like people who delighted in approaching Him, as such, it looked unfair that God didn't accept the fasting of righteous people.

Today, the Lord revealed the error and deception in their spiritual life. He exposed the reality. They fasted but not with a right heart, not with the right intention and not in the manner acceptable to God. It was a hollow, selfish, empty ritual devoid of charity.

The simple message of God to His people and to us all is "if you want to fast the way that pleases me, begin with getting right with your brothers and sisters, stop oppressing others and reach out to help others."

Getting right with God begins by stopping the evil we do towards others. Lack of charity towards others empty our greatest spiritual exercise of value and substance.

Let us pray today that during this Lenten journey, the Lord will reveal our reality to us, that He would uncover to us areas of our lives that we need repentance and change, areas we need to be more charitable to others.