

- The bible tells us that there is a season for all everything, a time for every occupation under heaven.” Throughout the cycle of life we recognize that it is important to take time out to think, to dwell, to reflect, to ponder. We got good news today that there is going to be a baby, good news that someone in our family is going to get married. So, we sit with our coffee and we ponder, and we think. Isn't this great news? I am so happy for them? Isn't life great? I want to say thanks to God. The news comes that a loved one has died. Someone has been diagnosed with cancer. We sit with our coffee and we pray for them. We go to happy memories of the past. We wonder about life with its many ups and downs. Some people have it hard. To take this kind of time out is a very important thing. Otherwise we are just like machines plodding along buying and selling.
- In front of the great season of Easter we are invited to go to the spiritual desert where there must be no distractions. In that place we are invited to think about God and the things of God. What is the impact on me? They took our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ and they crucified Him? Because I am part of sinful humanity I have to ask, what part did I play in that? Sinful humanity condemns innocent people all the time. There were lots of times when I am the one who should go on trial but I got away with it because I love my sinful life. Before God, Jesus was the one who was willing to take the rap for me. He takes the rap for me all the time. I get away with murder and I expect Jesus to take care of it. That is the only reason I am able to say I am saved, because Jesus always takes care of it.
- According to our Catholic tradition we fast and abstain from everyday comforts as a token of our willingness to enter into this penitential reflective season. We are invited to go deep but I think in many ways we prefer to stay with the superficial in order to avoid going to the depths. So, I play with it. I might say, hmm... this year I think I will give up Facebook. No, better, I will give up going to the movies. No, better I will refrain from eating cake. I focus all my Lenten energy on giving up things that I know won't upset me too much. The invitation is to go deep into the desert where I can grow my faith... I think I will pass on that one. Let the monks and the nuns do those things. That's why we pay them the big bucks, we say.
- Jesus always invites me to follow Him in a more profound way. I love telling people that Jesus is the center of my life. I tell them, I serve Him alone. I know that those are just a bag full of words. Truth is I choose to make the journey as easy as possible. If there is a remote control or an app for that, I want it. I don't want to have to work so hard at being a Christian and a Catholic. I plant my Christian life in leafy suburbia where it's full of flowers and trees. I don't want any ground zero. I don't want my Christianity to be so challenging.

- The readings suggest that we are far away from God. The prophet Joel says, “Return to me with your whole heart. “ Paul says in his letter today, “We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. We appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.” We remember that Jesus sat for a long time waiting for the woman of Samaria to come to the well. He sits at the well waiting for me to come as well. But I never show up. I never have our meeting. I like to be always running late, because that is how I maintain control. I might. I might not. One day I will go in search of Him and He might not be there for me. Why should He? Truth is, I don’t want to come too close to Him. I don’t want to save my soul. Let Jesus do that for me. I just want to have fun. So, Jesus waits and He waits. All He wants to do is come close to me. All I want to do is avoid Him.
- Paul’s words are gracious: We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Working together then we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says: In an acceptable time I hear you, and on the day of salvation I helped you. Behold now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.