

Lent: A Time To Retreat, Remember, Reconsider, Re-engage

By Pastor Cathi Braasch

Lent. The season of repentance and preparation. It's here again. Already. Again. We're just 60 days out from Christmas as I write, barely 40 days away from Holy Week and Easter. The cross overshadows the crèche, the nativity scene so fondly, carefully, tenderly portrayed with figurines in our homes and statues on our snow-covered church lawn. We've barely packed those decorations. And now, we look again to Jesus, who is no longer a tiny infant to hold in our hands. Now we begin to see Him for who He fully is: The One who holds *our* lives in *His* nail-scarred hands.

Over the near half-century since my final preparations for baptism, I've come to see Lent as being a bit like pulling into a rest area on a long journey. During Lent, we retreat, pulling off the road or path that has occupied us. We pause and check our direction and progress. We remember, and maybe, even reconsider, our destination and our ways and means of getting there. Then, after a suitable time, we re-engage. We get back on the road and move on.

Now, in Lent 2015, the Lord is pulling me over to the side in yet another congregation – the fifth in five years – to again retrace Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the Cross. Though the location is different, the process is the same. It's time to Retreat. Remember. Reconsider, Re-engage.

As I do so, a hymn title and inspiration texts come to mind. You'll find that hymn, "*I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say, Come unto Me and Rest,*" in the box. You'll find the inspiration texts, Matthew 11:28-30 and John 6:35 in your Bible. And, if a rest and reminder, courtesy of our Lord Jesus Christ, were important to His first followers, how much more do we need to heed them today? It's never too early or too late to pause for a moment or a church season like Lent, to take stock of the situation, and get on with His mission in a bold, clear way.

Retreat, remember, reconsider, and re-engage. Hear the voice of Jesus say: Come unto Me and rest. In this corner of Christ's Church, in the Year of our Lord 2015, we're moving intentionally through an interim season -- and, yes, we all have been busy. I'm not suggesting that everyone get busier at church during Lent. Instead, I'm suggesting a deep, lasting change in our way of being, our ways of abiding in Christ in whatever we are doing.

There is a rest area for the church – it's called Lent. Pull on over. Take this Lenten season – individually, as families, and as a holy community -- to *Retreat, Remember, Reconsider and Re-engage* the mission and ministry that our Lord has called us into, that we may be ready, prepared for all the seasons yet to come.

"I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say"

Inspired by

Matthew 11:28-30 and John 6:35

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down,
Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad.

2. I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream.
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

3. I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light.
Look unto Me; thy morn shall rise
And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of Life I'll walk
Till traveling days are done.

Pastor Cathi