

# Lent—Time to reflect, pray

February 10, 2016

Growing up in my Southern Baptist church in a small town in New Mexico, I did not hear or know about the Lenten season. My mom's side of the family grew up in the Catholic Church, so they spoke of Lent. But we were not around them during that time of year, so I never was exposed fully to the purpose and intent.



René Maciel It wasn't until college at Hardin-Simmons University that I began to hear more about it and was around other students who observed Lent. As I have grown in my faith and have been around other Christian mentors who practiced and followed the Christian calendar, I have learned to appreciate and understand the Lenten season.

Now, I look forward to this time each year and the opportunity it gives me to prepare my heart and life throughout 40 days before Easter. I now cherish this time to reflect on Jesus Christ, to consider his suffering and his sacrifice, his death, burial and resurrection. It is a special time for me and my family, as I also have challenged them to use this time to prepare for the Easter celebration.

The Lenten season allows me to observe a time of fasting and repentance. It calls me into a deeper time of prayer for 40 days, a time to draw closer to God in meditation and conversation. It is a time to call on him and a time to

listen to his call.

This year, I will use this time to continue to ask God to bless his work through the Baptist General Convention of Texas. I believe in the work he is doing and ask you to continue to lift up the leadership and opportunities God is giving us to bring others into the kingdom of God.



In Richard Foster's book *Prayer*, he talks about the "prayer of examen" and the examen of consciousness. This is where we prayerfully reflect on the thoughts, feelings and actions of our days to see how God has been at work among us. Foster says: "God wants us to be present where we are. He invites us to see and hear what is around us and, through it all, to discern the footprints of the holy."

My prayer for us as a convention is that we will reflect upon the present work God has given us, to look around us, to consider how God already is working and to discern the holy.

I hope you will join me as I continue to pray for our convention through February, and I hope you also will consider this wonderful time before Easter to reflect and pray on his footprints in our lives.

"So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes" (Daniel 9:3).

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