

## HOMILY SEVENTH SUNDAY A 200223 SW3

Sooner or later most of us experience the joys of international air travel.

The journey to airport, finding the terminal and then locating the check-in desk. All that we manage, but – not rarely – and especially on long haul flights, off to the side of the queue is somebody frantically unpacking and repacking their suitcase. Their most intimate items of clothing are strewn across the floor for all to see. Sometimes it is simply because they have found their bag is over the free baggage allowance and they are try to offload things they have now decided they can do without. Or, again, it may be because, extremely prudently, they began by making sure they had the essentials for travel: passport and ticket, and put them in the bag to make sure they weren't left behind, and then !!!! packed everything else on top.

Lent begins on Wednesday, Ash Wednesday, and you have probably already thought about something you can give up. It's probably something you'd be better off without anyway. Sugar in your tea/coffee, a second glass of wine, or hours glued to a shimmering screen. Well, great, that's a good place to start. But today's gospel challenges us to go deeper, to look at some of the most fundamental options we make as to how we treat other people.

Lent is the time, not only a looking at little changes we might make, but also to hear once again the challenge Christ makes to us, to be converted, to be a Christian. Yes, it can be tough to respond lovingly to those who treat us badly, want to destroy our reputation or cause us some other harm. But if it were easy, wouldn't we all be saints and have no need of Lent?

Lent is Christ challenging us to follow him, to leave old ways behind. Lent is about more than praying and striving for a change in our waistline, it's about a change in our way of life.

Canon Paschal Ryan

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