

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Going Within Ash Wednesday February 18, 2015 8:15 AM J1 2:12-18;
2 Cor 5:20—6:2; **Mt 6:1-6, 16-18** (The theme of the Christian Lent is to be personally
attached to God in a deliberate, intentional way.)

Anyone who goes to Lourdes or Rome cannot help but be impressed by the crowds of people who are evidently full of faith, whose devotion is palpable; and one can be actually **caught up in that sort of feeling or emotion**, much like going to a football game, which is full of feeling and emotion of an almost religious character.

But **there's another side to faith, and that's what Jesus is talking about here**. It isn't about anybody else. It isn't even about emotion. It's not really about feeling. **It's about something very interior, very secret**. "When you pray, go to your room and shut your door. When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing." It's not for your credit. It's to let go of the very need for credit. "When you fast, don't let anyone know you are fasting. Don't look glum."

So this is a different twist that becomes now **the theme of the Christian Lent. It's about looking inside**. It's about asking the Lord to help us be renewed, not to belong to something, not to be part of something, but **to be personally attached to God in a deliberate, intentional way**, to serve God in a deliberate and intentional way, not because others will praise us or not because others will know or not because of anything else, not because we will feel part of somebody else or something else, but **just to serve God**. And this takes real devotion, but not like that which we see and feel in others. It's something else. Jesus is indicating we need to find that in ourselves.