

Lent 1B - 2024

Factory re-setting and software update of Christian life during Lent:

Alternatively referred to as a factory reset or factory restore, a computer's factory settings are the settings the computer had when it was first purchased. ... A factory reset is often performed before a computer is resold to help resolve any software issues or eliminate the previous user's profile and personal data.

Software updates are a way for software developers to fine-tune a product to make it the best it can be. They offer small, frequent improvements rather than major changes. Unlike a software upgrade, updates need the existing programs you are using to work. Updates sometimes run automatically in the background. A **software upgrade** is a bit different. Instead of building on your existing program, a software upgrade is a new version of the software product entirely.

Lent is the time to do the "factory resetting" of our spiritual life and update it by leading a life of repentance and renewal of life. Today's First Reading makes a "factory reset" by reminding us of the New Covenant God made to Noah after the deluge, and the Second Reading "updates" the meaning and significance of our Baptism in the context of Lenten season which invites us to renew our Baptismal promises. <https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

A box of enchanted Turkish Delight

In C. S. Lewis' book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the wicked queen entices the boy, Edmund, with a box of enchanted Turkish Delight. Each piece is sweet and delicious, and Edmund has never tasted anything better. There is only one problem. The more he eats of this enchanted Turkish Delight, the more he wants. He doesn't know that this is the wicked queen's plan. The more he eats, the more he will want, and thus he will eat and eat until it kills him. It would never satisfy his hunger; it would never fill him up...it would simply kill him. (Rev. John Lestock) — Lewis is giving us a metaphor for temptations to sin. Sin never satisfies, it only enslaves. <https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Lent: Spring Training For Christians

In the 50's it was known that, "Baptists don't do Lent." No one knew why. I suspect that it was an anti-Catholic thing which I pray we are over. It was the old argument, "whatever they do, we don't!" - a curiously convoluted, twisted and unhealthy way to decide on religious practices. Whatever the reason for "not doing Lent," I think it is

a great loss for any Christian not to prepare for Good Friday and Easter. Every spring the baseball players prepare for the season with spring training; every spring ordinary people prepare for summer by doing "spring cleaning." So why shouldn't Christians prepare for the most important events in Jesus' ministry - what he did for us on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, what he did for us on Golgotha's cross and at the empty tomb? If it helps you, think of Lent as a kind of Christian spring training and spring cleaning. (by John Ewing Roberts, Remembering and Forgetting)

"Baptize the entire Ford Motor Plant," Henry Ford:

You might have heard the story of the machinist who worked years ago at the original Ford Motor Company plant in Detroit, Michigan. Over a period of years, he had "borrowed" from the factory various car parts and tools which he hadn't bothered to return. While the management never condoned this practice, nothing was ever done about it.

In time, however the "forgetful" machinist experienced a Christian conversion and was baptized. More importantly, the man took his Baptism seriously and became a devout believer. The very morning after his Baptism, the machinist arrived at work with his pickup truck loaded with all the parts and tools he had taken from the Ford Company over the years. He went to his foreman and explained that he never really meant to steal them and asked to be forgiven. The foreman was so astonished and impressed by this act that he cabled Henry Ford himself, contacting the auto magnate while he was away visiting a European Ford plant. In his telegram the foreman described the entire event in great detail. Ford immediately cabled back this striking two-line response: "Dam up the Detroit River. Baptize the entire Plant!" — Our Scripture for this First Sunday in Lent focuses on the effect our Baptism should have on our lives especially during the Lenten season. <https://frtonyshomilies.com/>.

We Haven't Been Up To Bat Yet

Temptation tries to blind us to other possibilities. A business man driving home from work one day, saw a little league baseball game in progress. He decided to stop and watch. He sat down in the bleachers and asked a kid what the score was.

"We're behind 14 to nothing," he answered with a smile. "Really," he responded. "I have to say you don't look very discouraged." "Discouraged?" the boy asked with a puzzled look on his face. "Why should we be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet." (by Brett Blair at www.eSermons.com)