**Lent Devotionals – Day 15**

Fasting Challenge: Soft Drinks

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 3:16-17; Matthew 18:18-20

Prayer Emphasis: Community & God’s Presence

*“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.’”*  *(I Corinthians 3:16-17)*

Devotional Thought: Between the Old Testament and the New Testament a fundamental shift happened in Temple theology. In the Old Testament, God’s presence could only be found in the Holy of Holies, a special chamber within the temple walls. In the New Testament, Temple theology became decentralized, and God’s presence, through His Holy Spirit, began to rest within His people.

 While addressing the Church in Corinth, Paul says, “*Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you*?” (I Corinthians 3:16-17) This is a powerful statement, because it suggests God’s presence no longer dwells in the Temple in Jerusalem, but dwells wherever Jesus’ followers are gathered together in community. This is a beautiful concept we should neither take lightly nor fail to remember. When we gather together as a body, God’s very presence is there with us. Before Jesus, this claim might have been considered blasphemy, but after Jesus we realize it was God’s plan from the beginning.

 Next time you gather with your brothers and sisters in Christ, remember God’s presence is there with you. This very sacred reality will hopefully thrust more meaningful discussion, deeper fellowship, stronger bonds of love, and collective transformation. For Jesus says, “*wherever two or three come together in my name, there am I with them*.” (Matthew 18:20)

*Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.*

***St. John of Chrysotom***