

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin. Ps. 51:1 NIV*

The words of this psalm were composed by David after his affair with Bathsheba, which led to the “planned death” of Bathsheba’s husband on the battlefield. If you read the whole story in II Samuel, it does not make the “king that was closest to God’s heart” look good at all. When all is said and done, the prophet Nathan confronts David with the terrible thing he has done. The reaction we might expect to get would be denial, or some time spent in making excuses for his behavior. But David reacts in neither of these ways. His response is found in Ps. 51. He puts the blame on himself, and asks for God’s forgiveness. He will not “fudge” the facts or point fingers. Perhaps that is why when we read David’s response to Nathan’s accusations in Second Samuel, the prophet can tell David that the “Lord has put away your sin”

This week is the beginning of Lent with our Ash Wednesday Service. In fact the service begins with a reading of Ps. 51. Ash Wednesday Service in fact focuses on our “missing the mark with God” in many areas, individually as well as a community of faith.

To the world that might seem depressing, but on our individual and corporate spiritual journey’s nothing keeps us in connection with God in honesty and love more than the acknowledgement that the only right one is God.

Pleased be assured though, when you enter in the process of taking responsibility for your “missing the mark” with God and confessing it you will not be left empty, but filled with the forgiving love of God won through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Take the Lenten journey this year and start by attending Ash Wednesday Service this week. One of the things that I constantly hear is that people wish to grow spiritually in their lives. Being honest and open with God is a good place to start, and acknowledging our failure to follow God will in the end not hurt, but will eventually heal.

Pr. John Van Haneghan