

SPECTRUM

METANOIA

BY JOHN VALK

Last week Christian Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, began their Lenten season. Lent, which means springtime, is the 40 day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter. It is marked by fasting, penitence and renewal.

Lent is altogether different than Christmas. Christmas evokes images of joy and peace, focused in the innocent child born in humble surroundings. Good cheer, benevolence and gift-giving lift the human spirit.

But unencumbered joy and peace are momentary and fleeting, at the best of times. Our human spirit becomes burdened: freedom of choice sows seeds of destruction. Christmas cannot be sustained, it gives way to the Passion. The innocent child has become the confronting adult, unleashing

the viciousness of human nature, and death is imminent.

Ash Wednesday initiates Lent. Ashes symbolize frailty or death, sadness or mourning, judgement and repentance. These symbols are highly appropriate. In Christ's suffering we see sorrow and repentance for participation in life's evils. In rededication and renewal we are purified and set free.

The ashes used in Ash Wednesday services come from palm leaves, from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations. Mixed with oil or water, they are put on the forehead in the sign of a cross. And the words are uttered: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." Our individual wealth or influence is powerless in the face of our mortality.

Lent has to do with death and

LENT

transformation. Through his death and transformation (resurrection), Christ provided healing for us in this life and peace in the next. By dying to our old ways and habits we are transformed.

That's what's so tough about Lent. It refuses to allow us to shift blame or responsibility, or finger others for our misery. It forces us to focus ourselves. We must first change ourselves before we can change, or expect to change, others.

Endless criticism, blame and offense is hurled at the church today, for its failures, pronouncements, history, etc. But the church is really people. During Lent the church puts the ball back into our own courts. Reflect on what you yourselves are doing, is the simple but profound message. Think about your own arrogance, self-

ishness and pride, and the implications of all your words and actions. It is these that led an innocent man to an excruciating death; it is these that cause each of us, and our planet, to die a little each day.

We have become wrapped up in ourselves. We forget to listen to what God is saying. As a result our perceptions become distorted. In our struggles to shape our economic futures, to attain power and influence to find inner peace and security, we honour ambition, reward greed, celebrate materialism, worship acquisitiveness, and cherish success. And then we create a hell for ourselves. That hell is not so much a punishment for our warped ways of life as it is a result of them.

In her book *To Dance with God*, Gertrud Mueller Nelson states that Scripture readings, symbols and discipline forms of Lent are offered by the church to surround each of us as consciously and as creatively as we can with the business of transformation. The church encourages us to give up things-

-idiosyncrasies, interpersonal laziness, our selfishness, our fears, the habit of control, criticize, put-down. We ought to give up our egos for the sake of something bigger, for something better in ourselves, and for the sake of someone else.

Hence, there is a three-fold form of discipline for Lent: prayer - for the good of our souls; fasting - for the good of our bodies; almsgiving - for the good of our neighbour. These are not frivolous, nor are they absolute. They are a means to focus our thoughts.

Fasting is particularly good for focusing. That is why it is an important part of Lent. It is also linked to Jesus' words: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Math. 4:4). These words remind us that while we are to take care of our daily needs, we are not to grow anxious about them. Fasting helps us to get our priorities straight, for we today have them confused.

THE PIGEON'S RIGHT WING

BY ANDREW B. SKALING & JAMES R. KIERSTEAD

Socialism is dead, or is it? According to the International Socialist, it is alive. They base their belief that socialism has yet to be discredited, because according to them, no country has ever been under the power of a truly socialist government. The former Soviet Union was not a socialist/communist state; it was simply a capitalist state in which the government controlled all the property and all industry.

After attending an International Socialist meeting a few weeks ago, we

were amazed that they blamed all problems of society on capitalism. Racism, war, hunger, etc. were all pointed out as problems created by capitalism. As an example of their beliefs, they pointed out that world hunger is a staggering problem - which it is - citing unfounded statistics as to the extent of this problem. Socialism's answer: Instead of shipping excess grain to the ocean to be dumped, we should ship it to the third world countries that are starving. Well, that unfortunately is impossible. After

hearing the solution, we had to wonder if the person speaking had ever heard of economics. Grain is dumped in the ocean to protect its price. If we gave it away freely in large quantities we would be creating a serious gap in our economy. The economic impact would be drastic, as grain is one of our chief exports. It would send the price plummeting to ridiculously low levels, which would create a farm crisis in Canada. Grain farmers would be unable to sustain their operations, resulting in

through to look like Her.

Now, while we (may) say we do not take seriously the messages Society sends us regarding beauty expectations, they are still influencing us. I firmly believe that until we redefine and recreate Society's mainstream beauty ideal, we will still perpetuate and expect women to (somehow) live up to these unhealthy and unrealistic beauty standards. It is simply not enough to reject Society's mainstream beauty ideal and Her. I will leave you with this question (referring to cosmetics): "... is it the false need of a chauvinized woman, encouraged since infancy to identify her values as a person with her attractiveness in the eyes of men? Or does it express love for one's own body by adoring it...?"

the need for government to subsidize the farmers at even more expense to the taxpayer.

Another irrational aspect of socialism is its belief in the redistribution of wealth from the productive, to the less productive. This principle does not create a society in which every citizen would be well supported. The main principle of capitalism is profit. The more you work, the more you are rewarded. This creates a society where everyone has the incentive to work harder. Socialism is even more pathetic than the poorly designed welfare state that currently exists. Under this system, the unemployed person who collects

welfare is achieving a living which was stolen from somebody who genuinely earned it. As an unfortunate but very true cliché states: "wealth makes the world go around".

Although we strongly disagree with the principles of socialism, we nevertheless have a great deal of respect for those who believe in them, and work hard to promote socialism. A person who works to promote what they believe in, deserves respect even if those beliefs are far-fetched. As strong advocates of capitalism, we always think of a statement made by former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker: "socialism is the equal sharing of misery".

WIMMIN'S ROOM

BY LIZ LAUTARD

WHO IS SHE?

Who is She, the woman in the advertisement? Be it magazine, television, or Bettyboard (sorry, I meant billboard) advertising. She is certain to have the following characteristics: young, tall, with perfect skin (i.e. no pores and no wrinkles). She is (often) blonde, blue-eyed with a skinny figure. She is (almost) always white. Now, here are some of the more interesting facts: She is also hairless (except for the glorious mane on her head, of course). Indeed, She "has no facial hair, no hair on arms or legs or underarms". She also has no female odour as "[S]he's always in the tub, using deodorants under [H]er crotch and then covering the deodorant smell with lots of perfume" (Chanel or Colours, I am sure). One may wish to note that only a very tiny portion of women could ever hope to live up to this image presented in advertising.

Our society upholds incredibly unrealistic beauty standards for women and girls to live up to. Society, through the ideal woman in advertising, reassures women and girls that they too can be this beautiful (just like Her). All they have to do is buy, and use, product A and product B. But, it is never enough. There is always something to make her hair shinier, something to make her lips seem fuller and something to make her skin that much more softer and creamier-looking. The list of improvements suggested in advertising is endless.

These unrealistic beauty standards, coupled with Her, in every woman's face, is a form of oppression and enslavement. Think of the hours, the money and the time (not to mention the energy) a woman can spend in trying to live up to Society's beauty expecta-

tions. A woman is expected to be a slave to the beauty grind. Just look at any one of the numerous teen or women's magazines and you are faced with 'beauty' advertisements and Her (Society's ideal beauty) on every single glossy page. The worst thing is that this is presented to use as if this (Society's example of the beauty ideal) is normal and so is the unnatural quest women are expected to go

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The Department of Mathematics & Statistics will operate a drop-in help centre at various locations on campus. The centre will provide free tutoring for mathematics courses (including upper level courses) and will be staffed by graduate students, Yongyi Bi and Xiubin Xu.

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WEDNESDAY:	1:00 - 5:00pm	C307A
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