

SIN

It's sinful what the world and even the church have done with sin. For too many people and too many years sin has been about morality, breaking the rules—interestingly enough, the rules that we choose to highlight. To sin is to have naughty thoughts or do naughty things. It is to cuss. It is to tell a dirty joke or hang out in a bar. Ho hum!

“Sin” reveals what our biggest problem is. Sin gives us insight into what is wrong with the world, other people, and, yes, ourselves. Sin suggests that life is not what it ought to be. Sin tells us that we live in a world that is separated—separated from ourselves, the earth, and ultimately God. We are disconnected from the very one who is the source and goal of all things. We are messed up. That's what sin says. And the church has said for a long time that that messed-upness comes with our origins. From the very beginning we have been messed up. No one can get around this truth. It is a truth democratically shared by all. The church has labeled this reality “original sin.”

Lent is a time to be taken into the wilderness to deal with our sin, to struggle with our preoccupation with ourselves, to note the ways that we live out our separation. I suppose giving up chocolate may be a way to struggle against the things that separate us, that keep us from a full life. But much bigger than chocolate are the things that keep us from other people, the lies we tell ourselves in order to protect us from ourselves, our poor stewardship of the earth, our hard heartedness, the injustice that causes division in the human family, the racism and the sexism within us that diminish others and ultimately ourselves, and the addictions that keep us from facing the pain within us. These are the bigger issues, the ones that deserve intense consideration during this Lenten wilderness journey.

Bill Uetracht