

Lent as a great spring cleaning (Excerpt from the Revue Sérénité, of Vie Montante Belgium)

We know it well, the most beautiful impetus may dull. A great love needs celebrations, birthdays so as not to tarnish routine. Our faith in Jesus, for whom death is not the last word and the future is always open, also needs strong times to wake up, to regain its enthusiasm.

Each year, in the spring, forty days of Lent are given to us as a time of training to live more as Christians and to prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter with a willing heart. The program, we have known for a long time: praying, fasting and sharing. But every year we can live it differently.

For sharing, in 2019, Entraide et Fraternité will invite us to look at the Philippines, to support small farmers in rural areas and especially young people, and to help the development of ecological agriculture in this country where there are many obstacles, starting with access to land.

To give life and flavor to our Lent, Cardinal Danneels (from Belgium), with all the common sense that we know him, had one day published these 10 practical tips:

- 1/Pray. Every morning the "our Father" and every evening the "Hail Mary".
- 2/Look in the Sunday gospel, a little phrase that you could meditate all week.
- 3/Every time you buy an item you don't need to live – a luxury article – also gives something to the poor or to a charity. Give them a small percentage. Overabundance demands to be shared.
- 4/Do something good for someone every day. Before he or she asks you.
- 5/When someone makes an unpleasant statement to you, do not imagine that you must immediately return the same. It does not restore balance. In fact, you fall into the gear. Shut up for a minute and the wheel will stop.
- 6/ If you have been zapping for a quarter of an hour without success, turn off the TV and take a book. Or speak with those who live with you: it's better to zap between humans and it works without a remote control.
- 7/ During Lent always leave the table with a little hunger. Dieticians are even more severe: do this all year round. One in three people suffer from obesity
- 8/ Forgiving is the superlative of giving.
- 9/ You have already so often promised to call someone by phone or to visit him. Do it eventually.
- 10/ Do not always get caught with ads that show a reduction. It costs 30% cheaper. But your clothes closet falls and overflows by 30%.

"Ten rules for a good Lent," warned the Cardinal, but they do not mean anything if they do not bring us closer to God and men. Or if they make us sad. This time must make us lighter and happier. "This is what we wish each other in all our movements, for a light and joyous rise to Easter.

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