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## *Is The Radio Right?*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

I usually have the radio turned on in the morning, somewhere around my usual chores and getting to the Cathedral. Atlanta has a very popular AM radio personality, whom I have listened to ever since he worked for the old WRNG radio station. Like many Atlantans, I admit a fondness for him, though I do not hesitate to switch stations when his humor becomes puerile or his anger becomes pompous.

On this past Monday, his opening announcement amused me. "Well," he said (I admit some paraphrasing here), "What is going on this week? Not much at all. We had the super bowl yesterday. We had the president's state of the union speech last week. Not much is on the agenda this week."

Not true in my part of the world. Wednesday, February 9, began one of the holiest seasons of the Christian year. It was Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, when we began forty days of preparation for the great feast of Easter. It is not as old as every Christian tradition, but it certainly has been occurring for over 1300 years, long before the super bowl and long before our country began electing presidents.

From the prayer book, we read these words on Ash Wednesday: "Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. ,Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith."

The Ash Wednesday service continued, "I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word."

Not everything we hear on the radio is right. Sometimes it behooves us to take a step or two back, to retreat from the urgency of the daily news, and to consider just what part of the world we want to participate in. Every one of us lives in the world, to be sure, and we must participate in the world's necessary affairs.

But we Christians belong to another kingdom, too, another reality. Ours is the reality of death and resurrection, the reality of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the reality of grace and forgiveness, which we commit to learning again and again.

I pray that we learn that reality again this season. What will you give up, or take on, for Lent? Such a discipline is not a requirement for the Christian life, but it sure is good practice. When we give up something, we remind ourselves that we are not addicted to the matters of this world. Instead, we have space for something else; we have space for a sure and certain relationship with God, the God of forgiveness, grace, and love.

The Cathedral of St. Philip, like every Christian Church, will provide some excellent ways of observing a holy Lent. Read this issue of the Cathedral Times for more details. Come to a Quiet Day. Walk the labyrinth. Volunteer in our new Information Desk! Give to the BCM food drive, or visit the new Cathedral Thrift House. Come to the Absalom Jones feast day observance.

Participate in one of our many weekly bible studies. Commit to attending a Sunday morning education class. (The Dean's Forum class will study "Blessing and Holiness" for the first two Sundays in Lent; then we will welcome Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Seminary, on the Sundays of February 27, March 6, and March 13).

The Ash Wednesday invitation always ends with these lines: "And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer." Indeed, the season of Lent is time to make a right beginning. The radio is not always right. But repentance is always right. Turn around. Begin again. Start anew. We are preparing again, as we have for two thousand years, for a grand Easter celebration of resurrection.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler