

## **A Fat Tuesday reflection...**

Tonight we feast, thanking God for the gifts He gives us. And tomorrow some of us will join millions around the world and begin to fast, seeking God to use our self-denial to make us more aware of the needs of others, and to help us to follow Him in laying down our selves for the sake of blessing and serving others. We will practice saying no to ourselves, and yes to God and the people around us.

But not only is Lent a time for us to reflect on and practice self-denial, it is also a time to reflect on and delight in the gracious love of God for us and for all, supremely revealed at the cross.

Which should clue us into the fact that Lent doesn't need to be a somber time. It is a time to take the love of God to heart; to meditate on and celebrate the love of God, for us and for all. So much so, that God's love would come to reshape the whole of our lives.

So, as we consider and enter into Lent, let's make this our aim – to fast *in love*, and *for love*, knowing that this love has a name – Jesus.

May God use this season of Lent, and our participation in it, to awaken us afresh to our need for the cross, and to transform us into men and women who live in the way of the cross for the sake of the world around us – our friends and family, our neighbors and strangers...

Before we read and pray the "fat Tuesday prayer", have a few people share how participating in Lent has impacted their lives in the past, or how they intend to participate in Lent this year.

**Fat Tuesday prayer...**

[read a portion, then pass it to the next person to read, and so on]

*Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for it is from your goodness that we have this day to celebrate on the threshold of the Season of Lent.*

*Tomorrow we will fast.*

*Tonight we feast.*

*We thank you for the abundance of gifts you shower upon us.*

*We thank you especially for one another.*

*As we give you thanks,*

*we are mindful of those who have so much less than we do.*

*As we share these wonderful gifts together, we commit ourselves to greater generosity toward those who need our support.*

*Prepare us for tomorrow.*

*Tasting the fullness of what we have today, let us experience some hunger tomorrow.*

*May our fasting make us more alert and may it heighten our consciousness so that we might be ready to hear your Word and respond to your call.*

*As our feasting fills us with gratitude,*

*so may our fasting and abstinence hollow out in us a place for deeper, holy desires and an attentiveness to hear the cry of the poor.*

*May our self-denial turn our hearts to you and give us a new freedom for generous service to others.*

*We ask all this with our hearts full of delight and stirring with readiness for the journey ahead. We ask them with confidence in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.*