

Friday Penance: Will's story

'A sacrifice of love'

On Friday 16th September the Bishops of England and Wales have decided to re-establish the practice of Friday penance which is fulfilled by abstaining from meat and by uniting this to prayer.

In a moving and thought-provoking video recording, 20 year old, Will Desmond from Sussex, shares his reasons for abstaining from meat on Fridays and the positive effect that it has had on his life.

Will said:

"Fasting gets rid of all the junk in my mind so that I'm just able to sit and just be with God. It's like giving myself a spiritual workout so that I can grow these spiritual muscles and also it means being able to increase my self control."

"I've recognised quite recently that when I sit down to eat, and I suddenly think, 'Should I be fasting?' Then a sense of relief comes over me as I realise, 'No, not today.' As a result I've become so much more grateful for the food that is in front of me and so much more aware of those who do go without."

"I think the feeling of hunger, what it can also do is put the Cross in perspective because that little suffering that I experience, I start to realise the suffering that Christ went through. It's obviously so much more than my hunger and so my love for him, my appreciation of what he did increases a huge amount. The Cross was a sacrifice of love and I suppose my fasting can be a sacrifice of love on my part for Jesus but also for others as well."

"It's just about a journey of growing in relationship so you know, if I fail this time, there's always next Friday! So I encourage everybody and yourself just to give it a try, just to take that step of faith."

Will is a member of the Sion Community for Evangelism which has a training centre in the Diocese of Brentwood. The community supports parishes and schools through running missions and resourcing and training people to contribute to the mission of the Catholic Church. See:

<http://www.sioncommunity.org.uk/> To view Will's video story please see:
<http://vimeo.com/29065709>

For more information about Friday Penance please see: <http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Media-Centre/Press-Releases/Press-Releases-2011/Friday-Penance>