



A Meditation on Lint (No, it's not a typo)

by Sharon Rollins

No, you didn't read it wrong. Yes, I said a meditation on "Lint." Which one of us hasn't had the audacity to make the pun? Really, now.

What is lint? It's that warm fuzzy stuff that my housemate seldom removes from the dryer screen. "You'll burn the house down," I remember hearing as a child from my dad. So, I throw the clothes in the dryer and tape the door shut. Then I look at the little metal lint screen door and think to myself, "Surely it wouldn't hurt if I just wait until after this load." Then I hear those words like the little angel/devil scenario in my head: "You'll burn the house down!" and I lift the lid, carefully pry out the broken plastic handle, and sweep the lint off the screen.

It's a ritual really, including the entire conversation that occurs in my head each time. But without the ritual, I'd surely "burn the house down" eventually. It's a cleansing ritual, a casting out of the parts that are no longer needed, a shedding of excess, which can, if left too long, create grave danger.

So too, is Lent, in its own way (if you'll allow the overstretched analogy). Is it not a ritual of giving away the bits and pieces of sin and dirt that have collected in our lives over the past year? A time of noticing the little deaths in each of us and presenting ourselves to have our screens wiped clean? Is it not an opportunity to prevent our houses from burning down from the inside out, from the filth that has collected within?

Lint as a symbol—yes, I've taken it too far now. But tell me, when was the last time you cleaned the lint screen in your life? I can see that mine is full.

—Sharon Rollins is a therapist at Family Counseling Center in Waco, Texas. This meditation, printed in Baptist Peacemaker, Volume 20 Number 1, Spring 2000, was printed first in the Lenten meditation booklet Inscape, a publication of Seventh and James Baptist Church. The art on

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