

Be Thou My Vision  
(DEE-1392) ANGELUS

Well, yesterday was the first Sunday of Lent, even if we haven't properly begun the season this year, because of the celebration of Lunar New Year. Most years in fact there is this clash, of Ash Wed. falling somewhere around the beginning of the Lunar New Year — it must do, after all (or about 4 weeks later), seeing that both events are tied to the phases of the moon. So the beginning of Lent in HK tends to catch Christians by surprise.... more so than it does elsewhere. But there's more to this being "caught by surprise", as it were. There is a reluctance to shift from the celebration of the Christmas period, and the intervening two New Years, to this other 40-day period of preparation for Easter: and it's rooted in more than simple unwillingness to leave the holiday season behind. Whenever it falls, the call of Ash Wednesday finds reluctant listeners, for our reluctance lies in the nature of that call and in our unwillingness to be converted — Ash Wednesday will always be a difficult day for human beings... As T.S. Eliot put it: "Because I do not want to turn again, because I do not want, because I do not want to turn." It's one of those extraordinary features of our human condition that, at a very real level of ourselves we don't want God, even though He is the only reality who can genuinely fulfill us. Over and over, we prefer to choose what is superficially satisfying, even though we know it frustrates the deepest cravings of our spirit. It's a mystery why this is so, part of the abundant dimension of reality which we Christians call sin. Despite all our speculation about the nature of evil, in the end it's hard to improve on the truth of Karl Barth's description that evil is the impossible possibility. So in the face of this reality of sin, both within and

outside of us, we can only come before God with the honest confession that we do not really want to be converted.

→ QQ. TABLET 'The Living Spirit'  
p170 16/2/80  
(John O'Donnell)

Think on it a little now, listening to another Ps. for today now, Ps 128,  
a Ps of Blessing. MUSIC (ERA-0.53) 2:17

PRAYERS

QQ. cont.