

Sunday, March 3, 2024



- **Readings**

- Exodus 20:1-17 *The Law was given through Moses.*
- Psalm 19 *Lord, You have the Words of eternal life.*
- 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25 *We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to some, but to those who are called, the wisdom of God.*
- John 2:13-25 *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*

- **Reflection**

With difficulty, St. Paul has said, you might not be able to die for a good person, a worthy person, but what proves God's love for us is that while we're still sinners, Christ died for us. This is hard for us to understand. I think it's because we have a strange, torn attitude towards Jesus and his death by crucifixion. We tend to be caught between two bad alternatives. The first is, "I am not worth it." And so, we can be stuck in our sin, or stuck by it so much, or even our lack of faith, that we just can't believe that He really dies to save us, even in our failure.

The second option, I think is even more troublesome. It is our attempt to make ourselves worth it. And so, we harbor this delusion: maybe, someday, I can go before Jesus and say, "Thanks for dying for all these other people, but I'm happy to let you know I didn't need it myself."

The Way of the Lord, Fr John F. Kavanaugh, SJ

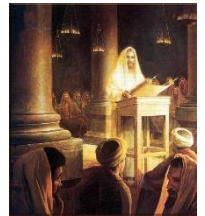
- **Prayer**

- *Lord, no matter how hard it is sometimes, I want to acknowledge that I need a Savior and You have made me worthy of salvation.*

Monday, March 4, 2024

- **Readings**

- 2 Kings 5:1-15a *There were many lepers in Israel in the time of the Prophet Elisha, and none of them were cleansed except Naaman, the Syrian.*
- Psalm 42 *My soul is thirsting for the Living God; when shall I see Him face to face.*
- Luke 4:24-30 *Jesus, like the prophets Elijah and Elisha, was sent not only to Israel.*



- **Reflection**

Jesus is teaching in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. I wonder what this experience was like for Jesus. It must have been difficult since Jesus bluntly tells his listeners that typically no prophet is accepted in his hometown. He must not have felt welcomed or accepted. Perhaps Jesus was too familiar to them for Him to be a prophet or even a teacher. They may have said to one another: "who does He think he is to be preaching to us? We have known Him since the day He was born!" Perhaps though, there was something deeper going on in the hearts of the people in Nazareth. Was it simply easier to dismiss Jesus rather than being open to listening to Him? Or were they afraid of what they might find if they looked deeply into their hearts?

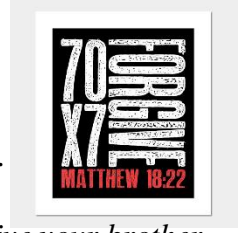
We are almost halfway through Lent. In these past weeks, have we taken time to look deeply into our hearts? Or have we been too busy to quiet down or perhaps even afraid to quiet down? For many of us Lent may not be a comfortable season of our Church year. And that is understandable! The season of Lent invites us and challenges us to quiet down and go deep into our minds and our hearts!

Lent calls us to examine our lives. Are we truly happy? Are we at peace? Or are we running? What are we running from? How would we describe our relationship with God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Is this relationship superficial or is it a deep and meaningful relationship? Lent is a time and a call to go deep within. Today may we deliberately take time to do just that. May we sit quietly with God or with Jesus and look into our hearts. What will we find there? Is Jesus there in our hearts? The reality is Jesus is there, but the question may be: will we be open and fully present to Jesus? It is your choice!

<http://ferdinandbenedictines.blogspot.com>

- **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you are the fulfillment of all our hopes and desires. Your Spirit brings us grace, truth, life, and freedom. Fill me with the joy of the Gospel and inflame my heart with love and zeal for You and for Your will.



Tuesday, March 5, 2024

• Readings

- Daniel 3:25, 35-43 *With a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted.*
- Psalm 25 *Remember your mercy, O Lord*
- Matthew 18:21-35 *So my heavenly Father will not forgive you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.*

• Reflection

When Peter poses the question of forgiveness, he offered an answer he thought Jesus would be pleased with. Why not forgive seven times! How unthinkable for Jesus to counter with one must forgive seventy times that. Jesus made it clear that there is no limit to forgiveness. He drove the lesson home with a parable of two very different debts. The first man owed an enormous sum of money and was forgiven his debt, yet that same man could not find it in his heart to forgive the small debt owed to him by his neighbor. No offence our neighbor can do to us can compare with our debt to God! We have been forgiven a debt which is beyond all paying; to ransom our debt of sin God gave up His only Begotten Son. If God has forgiven each of us, we, too must forgive others. Jesus teaches that one must forgive in order to be forgiven. If we do not forgive each other, we cannot expect God to forgive us.

<https://dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org>

• Prayer

Lord, You have been kind and forgiving towards me. May I be merciful as You are merciful. Free me from all bitterness and resentment that I may truly forgive from the heart those who have caused me injury of grief. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

• Readings

- Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9 *Observe the commandments so that you may live and show Your wisdom to the people.*
- Psalm 147 *Praise the Lord, Jerusalem*
- Matthew 5:17-19 *Whoever does and teaches the commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*



• Reflection

How often in life do we simply go through the motions of being Christian? Sitting in Mass on Sundays, saying a quick prayer at night before falling asleep, giving up sweets or Social Media for Lent without really thinking about what Lent is all about. Jesus challenges us all to enter more fully into God's laws. What is it that God is actually calling us to in life? What does following God's laws, God's commandments really mean, and how does it change our lives? We should not simply go through the motions of Christianity. Rather, as Jesus calls us to do, we must follow and enter fully into God's commandments.

Let us each take a few moments to think about ways that we can enter more fully into God's Kingdom. Are we following God's commandments because we have to? Or have we allowed God's commandments to enter into our lives? God wants us all to obey his commandments and lead others to follow him; he *wants* us to be called greatest in his Kingdom! <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu>

• Prayer

Holy Lord may our Lenten practices strengthen us to follow You more faithfully. Show us how to best uphold Your will so that others may be drawn to You and find refuge in the Church, the body of Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, AMEN.

Thursday, March 7, 2024

- **Readings**

- Jeremiah 7:23-28 *This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God.*
- Psalm 95 *If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts.*
- Luke 11:14-23 *Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather, scatters.*

- **Reflection**

Whom do I identify with in the crowd which witnesses Jesus' miracle? With those who watch in amazed belief? With those who reject Him? Or with those who hedge their bets, looking for further signs? Jesus forces us off the middle ground. We are either with Him or against Him.

Am I divided against myself – sometimes listening to Jesus, and sometimes listening to Satan?

Jesus' mission is to overcome evil in all its forms. This is an extraordinary task: it will cost Him His life, but we believe that He will succeed. The darkness cannot overcome the light.

Jesus did a good work, curing a man who was mute. Yet some of those around Him did not recognize His goodness. They even thought there was some evil power at work in Him. Their thoughts were formed from their own feelings, and not from what was happening outside them.

The Son of God was acting with divine power, "by the finger of God". The miracle was showing that the Kingdom of God had begun on earth. Jesus was beginning a new phase in human history and lifting our world up in a richly spiritual way. Jesus needed to be regarded then as now as the stronger one. No matter what difficulties people have in life, His power can deal with them. We all have to see Him as the Master and trust in Him. <https://www.sacredspace.ie>

- **Prayer**

Lord, help me to accept Your miracles in my life so that my life will give You glory in my actions, words, and thoughts. Do not let me be blind to the force of Your love in the world. I know You are stronger than Satan. I want to be in Your camp. I want to be rescued from the clutches of sin by the omnipotence of Your love. Through Christ our Lord, AMEN.

Friday, March 8, 2024

- **Readings**

- Hosea 14:1-9 *We will say no more, 'Our God,' to the work of our hands.*
- Psalm 81 *I am the Lord, your God; hear My voice.*
- Mark 12:28b-34 *Jesus said, "The Lord, our God, the Lord is One; you shall love the Lord your God," and, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

- **Reflection**

"You cannot love God without loving your neighbour and you cannot love your neighbour without loving God. In effect, the visible sign a Christian can show, in order to witness to His love for God to the world and to others, to his family, is the love He bears for His brothers, is the love of His people. The Commandment to love God and neighbour is the first, not because it is at the top of the list of Commandments. Jesus does not place it at the pinnacle but at the centre, because it is from the heart that everything must go out and to which everything must return and refer.

In the Old Testament, the requirement to be holy, in the image of God who is holy, included the duty to care for the most vulnerable people, such as the stranger, the orphan and the widow. Jesus brings this Covenant law to fulfilment, in His flesh, divinity and humanity, a single mystery of love.

Now, in the light of this Word of Jesus, love is the measure of faith and faith is the soul of love. We can no longer separate a religious life, a pious life, from service to brothers and sisters, to the real brothers and sisters that we encounter." - *Pope Francis – Angelus, 26 October 2014*)

- **Prayer**

Jesus, I thank You that Your love for me enables me to love You and my neighbour. Continue to remove sin from my heart so that my love is pure. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Saturday, March 9, 2024

- **Readings**

- Hosea 5:15b-6:6 *I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, says the Lord.*
- Psalm 51 *It is steadfast love and not sacrifice that God desires.*
- Luke 18:9-14 *The tax collector went home justified rather than the Pharisee; for all who humble themselves will be exalted.*

- **Reflection**

Look at the life of David. David committed adultery and had the husband of his mistress murdered. Do you think your sin is greater than that? God forgave David and promised that through his lineage would come one who would change everything. In Matthew's Gospel we read the genealogy of Christ, which includes David. The Prophet Isaiah states that the Messiah will arise from the tree of Jesse, and Jesse was David's father.

We have all messed up and have fallen short of the standard God has for us. We can make one of two choices in this situation: we can lie to ourselves, say that we have everything under control, and go deeper and deeper into sin; or we can learn from the example of David, in Psalm 51. We can see what we have done for what it is. We have sinned against a holy God, ourselves, and most likely others.

- **Prayer**

Lord, as I surrender to You, I lay my drooping spirit in Your arms. I am stained by sin and my wrongdoing is staring me in my face. Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love. What I have done has driven a wedge between us. I have sinned against You, and my heart aches with guilt and shame. Forgive me for disappointing You. Dip me in the fountain of Your forgiveness. Wash away my sin and bring brilliance to my tarnished spirit. Though Jesus Christ. Our Lord, AMEN.

