

Sunday, March 10, Fourth Sunday of Lent

• Readings

- 2 Chronicles 36:14-17a, 19-23 *The wrath and steadfast kindness of the Lord are shown by the exile and restoration of the people.*
- Psalm 137 *Let my tongue cling to my mouth if I do not remember You!*
- Ephesians 2:4-40 *Even when you were dead in your trespasses, by God's grace you have been saved*
- John 3:14-21 *God sent his only begotten Son so that the world might be saved through Him.*



• Reflection

- A missionary to Africa told the story of an elderly woman who came to faith. Though she was blind and could neither read nor write, she wanted to share her newfound faith with others. She went to the missionary and asked for a Bible in French. When she received it she asked the missionary to underline the verses of John 3: 16 in red. The missionary later learned what she would do with that Bible. Just before school let out, the woman went to the school's front door. As young people came out, she would stop and ask one if they knew how to read French. If someone replied, "yes," she would ask them to read the verse marked in red in her Bible. Then she would ask, "Do you know what this means?" And she would tell them about Christ. We have good news. God loves us so much that He gave us His only Son that we may have eternal life. This great news is not just for us alone, but for others. This is where we struggle. We need to find our way. The blind woman discovered her method; we need ours. Maybe it is simply giving someone a pamphlet to read. (Maybe this reflection?) Or we might invite someone to church. Be a missionary. Take the risk. Someone's eternity may depend on it.

Growing in Grace-Fr Thomas J Connery

- **Prayer** *Father, this is great news--we get to live for eternity. It is such great news that we are to share it, but we need help. We ask for the grace to be courageous. May we take that important step--in faith! May we bring this goodness to others. Amen.*

Monday, March 11, 2024

• Readings

- Isaiah 65:17-21 *No more shall the sound of weeping or the cry of distress be heard.*
- Psalm 30 *I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.*
- John 4:43-54 *Jesus said, "Go; your son will live."*



• Reflection

Do you ever wish that God would give you a sign from Heaven as a way of giving you some definitive guidance or direction in life? Do you look for signs from God and rely upon them?

If God were to give us some clear sign in life revealing His will, we should take it as a gift and be grateful for it. But receiving a sign from God is different than seeking a sign from God.

God is much greater than our hearts and, throughout His entire public ministry, Christ multiplies the signs (healings, exorcisms, resurrections) to awaken our trust and bring us to the Paschal mystery, a sign par excellence without which "your faith is worthless" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Christ gives freely and expects a free response.

Reflect, today, upon the greatest "sign" God has ever given. And if you find yourself struggling with questions in life, turn your eyes to this one definitive sign. Turn your eyes to the central mystery of our faith: the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ. It is there that every question can be answered and every grace is given. We need nothing more than this. <https://catholic-daily-reflections.com>

• Prayer

Lord, Your life, death and Resurrection is all I need to know in life. Your perfect sacrifice gives me every answer and pours forth every grace. May I always turn to You as the sign I need every day. Jesus, I trust in You. In Jesus name, AMEN.

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

- **Readings**

- Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12 *Water was flowing from the temple; and everything will live where the river goes.*
- Psalm 46 *The mighty Lord is our refuge.*
- John 5:1-16 *At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.*



- **Reflection**

God is our refuge, our safe place, our retreat, the place we go when we are afraid. And there is a lot of fear going around. God is also our strength or power. This is the same word that Jesus uses in Acts 1:8 when he promises to give us power with the coming of the Holy Spirit who now lives within us. But a place of refuge and a source of strength wouldn't do any good if unavailable. It's easy to think of things that might help but they are often a world away. You need safety and strength that are close by. Thankfully, God is also our ever-present Helper, the one who cares enough to share his unlimited resources with us. He is always near, nearer to us than we are to ourselves it seems.

When life often goes along as usual, we don't think much about how vulnerable we are. We take so much for granted, even the chance to be together. Then a crisis hits like the one we are now facing, and everything changes. The "trouble" that the Psalmist speaks of is the word for "tribulation" or "trial" or "distress." We are quite literally going through a tribulation right now—a chaotic, natural catastrophe of a great magnitude. In exactly this kind of situation, we find our even greater Helper, our God, who is our refuge and strength. <https://ourdailybread.org>

- **Prayer**

God, make your comforting presence and your sustaining power real to us now. Show us you are near and strong for us in a hundred different ways, both small and big. Thank you that you promise your presence and power when trials find us. You will never leave us or forsake us. You are with us and for us. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

DETERMINATION

- **Readings**

- Isaiah 49:8-15 *I have given you as a covenant to the people. To establish the land.*
- Psalm 145 *The Lord is kind and merciful.*
- John 5:16-30 *Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever He wishes.*

- **Reflection**

- Anyone who's ever seen the 1959 movie of Ben Hur starring Charlton Heston can't help but remember the rowing scene. In it, the enslaved Ben Hur rows, in unison, with 200 other slaves. Despite Quintus Arrius repeatedly increasing the pace, Ben Hur keeps up, with fire in his eyes and a determination not to be broken. It's the same determination Christ displays as he walked on the road, step by step, to Calvary. By staying in rhythm with His Father's will for Him, not only did Jesus redeem us, he is our role model for how to respond when life pushes us too hard. It is by uniting ourselves with God, and walking in his will, that we get through. *Living Hope -Claire McGarry*

- **Prayer**

- *Mighty God, grant me the strength I need for every challenge, trusting You'll carry me through. Amen.*

Thursday, March 14, 2024

- **Readings**

- Exodus 32:7-14 *Turn from Your fierce wrath; change Your mind and do not bring disaster on Your people.*
- Psalm 106 *Lord, remember us, for the love you bear your people.*
- John 5:18, 31-47 *Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope.*

**Put God
first!**

- **Reflection**

Where does God fall in the grand scheme of things? Is He at the top of your priority list or does He fall somewhere in the middle? If we are honest God sometimes ends up at the very bottom. Why is that and what can we do to prevent this from happening? Putting God ahead of everything takes work but it becomes easier when we are consistent working at it. When we start letting other priorities, money, job, sports, vacations, etc., become more important than God that it gets harder to give Him the top spot in our lives. So, how do we make sure we are giving Him that top spot? Through the three pillars of lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

- **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, sometimes I want my life to go according to my plans. I plot, I plan and then I execute. It is often in this action when I realize that I have failed to seek You first. Forgive my ignorance and grant me the desire to place You first in all that I do. In Jesus name I pray, AMEN.

Friday, March 15, 2024

- **Readings**

- Wisdom 2:1a, 12-23 *Let us condemn the Righteous One to a shameful death, for, according to what He says, He will be protected*
- Psalm 34 *The Lord is near to broken hearts.*
- John 1:1-2, 10, 25-30 *They tried to arrest Jesus, but His hour had not yet come.*

- **Reflection**

- Even though we know it's not true, there are times when I think that maybe God "owes" me or something. After all I'm a pretty good person, I try to lead a decent life, and I do what the Scriptures ask me to do. So why hasn't God-given me everything I want? Why isn't it "enough"? This kind of all-too-human thinking misses the secret purpose of God. Our lives might be lives of constant expectation, constant hope, constant striving for good things that may or may not ever materialize. God's plan is bigger than my plan. In order to live His plan, we must first respond to Him, "Yes, Lord, You know I love You." And then we leave it all in God's hands. *From Suffering to Salvation -Henri J. M. Nouwen*

- **Prayer**

- *Gracious and loving God, give me the grace to put my expectations for life in Your hands. Amen.*



Saturday, March 16, 2024

- **Readings**

- Jeremiah 11:8-20 *I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.*
- Psalm 7 *Lord, my God, I take shelter in you.*
- John 7:40-53 *Has not the scripture said that the Messiah comes from Bethlehem?*

- **Reflection**

If you've ever thought our society was going through a cultural and religious identity crisis, things were no different 2000 years ago. This was of great concern to the Pharisees – How does one live as a faithful Jew in a land that is occupied by Roman pagans? This seems like a perfectly legitimate question to ask in our own time – What does it mean to be a faithful Christian in a largely secular society?

The problem with the Pharisees is not so much this question, but the answer they give. They believed that Israel must separate itself from all Gentile impurity and defilement, because they thought this was the only way God would rescue His people from the clutches of Rome. So, we hear the Pharisees in today's gospel saying, 'This crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.' The Pharisees were for separation, for casting people out who didn't fit in with what they thought it meant to be a faithful Jew. And this is a great temptation for us today. Many of us are too ready to accuse others of not being true Christians because they don't see things exactly the same way we see them. But whatever a Christian believes, they cannot undo their baptism. It is because a baptized person always remains a true Christian that division in the Church is such a serious issue. So rather than writing off those Christians who disagree with us, we should be willing to engage in deep and serious discussion which is rooted in love for them and for God. After all, they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. <https://www.english.op.org>

- **Prayer**

Eternal Father, we praise you for sending Your Son to be one of us and to save us. Look upon your people with mercy, for we are divided in so many ways, and give us the Spirit of Jesus to make us one in love. We ask this gift, loving Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

