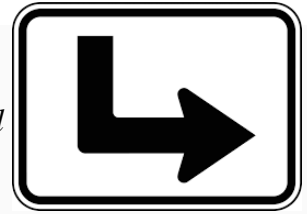


Sunday, March 17, 2024

• Readings

- Jeremiah 31:31-34 *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and remember their sin no more.*
- Psalm 51 *Create in me a clean heart, O God.*
- Hebrews 5:7-9 *Christ learned obedience and became a source of eternal salvation for all.*
- John 12:20-33 *If a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it bears much fruit.*



• Reflection

In John's Gospel this 5th Sunday of Lent, we are presented with a "hero" in a way which is dramatically different from what convention suggests. We begin to see Jesus at His most human, he is just like us in that He shares in the struggles of life by facing His own human struggle. He tells us "now my soul is troubled". These are certainly not the words we expect to hear from a leader, from a hero. There are three things we can learn from the Gospel this weekend: we should not be afraid to live through the ups and down of our own lives; it is ok to admit that we are struggling when we are and our lowest points can become the turning points we need. <https://www.jesuitinstitute.org.za>

- **Prayer** *O saving Christ, you obeyed Your Father in everything and were raised up for the salvation of the world. May we follow You in everything rejecting what is evil and holding fast to all that leads to life with You, who live and reign with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, AMEN.*



Monday, March 18, 2024

• Readings

- Daniel 13:19., 15-17, 19-30, 33-64 *I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things they have charged against me! And the Lord heard my cry.*
- Psalm 23 *Though I walk through the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.*
- John 8:1-11 *Let anyone of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.*

• Reflection

The scribes and the Pharisees had brought a woman to the temple area where Jesus was teaching. The woman, as John tells us twice, was caught in the act of adultery - unquestionably guilty. She was probably quickly covered, unkempt, and in fear for her life. She was made to stand in the middle, on display as a sinner. These leaders interrupt Jesus to ask His view on a life-or-death matter: Should they apply the Mosaic law that requires this woman's death by stoning? The leaders thought they had Jesus trapped. Humiliating the woman, they expected, would create sympathy for her among Jesus' listeners. If He chose to uphold the Mosaic law, He would appear cruel. This decision also would fly in the face of Roman law, which did not allow the Jews to put someone to death. Jesus could be accused as an enemy of the state. If Jesus said not to stone her, He would be seen as soft on sin and not supportive of the Law of Moses. The public would renounce Him. What would Jesus choose - deny the Law or the Romans? Choose life or death? Show justice or mercy?

What the scribes and Pharisees didn't realize was that Jesus, as God the Son, was perfect and infinite in His justice and mercy. So, He adds a condition to the throwing of stones: sinlessness.

Who is on display as a sinner now? No wonder the woman's accusers left! Only Jesus was sinless, but He doesn't condemn the woman. Neither does He dismiss the adultery as meaningless. He calls it "sin." He forgives her sin and tells her not to sin anymore.

Like the woman, we are all guilty of sin. But we can stand before God without sin if we are open to receive the gift of grace. <https://www.thedivinemercy.org>

• Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for having mercy on me, a sinner. Help me never to judge my neighbor, but to reflect on Your mercy at all times. Amen.

Tuesday, March 19, 2024 – Solemnity of St. Joseph

- **Readings**

- 2 Samuel 7:5a, 12-14a, 16 *The Lord God will give to him the throne of his Father David.*
- Psalm 89 *His line shall continue forever.*
- Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22 *Hoping against hope, Abraham believed.*
- Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a *Joseph did what the Angel had commanded.*
- or Luke 2:41-51a *Your father and I have been searching for You in great anxiety.*

- **Reflection**

What is it that made Saint Joseph so great? He wasn't immaculately conceived as our Blessed Mother was. He was not divine like Jesus. But he was the head of the Holy Family, its guardian, and its provider. He became the legal father of the Savior of the World and the spouse of the Mother of God. But Joseph is not great only because he was given such incredible privileges. First and foremost, he was great because of the choices he made in life. The Gospel refers to him as a "righteous man" and as a man who "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." Thus, his greatness is primarily on account of his moral righteousness and obedience to the will of God.

Joseph's obedience is especially seen in the fact that he obeyed the voice of God given to him in the four dreams recorded in Scripture. In his first dream, Joseph is told "do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" ([Matthew 1:20–21](#)). In his second dream, Joseph is told, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him" ([Matthew 2:13](#)). In his third dream, Joseph is told, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead" ([Matthew 2:20](#)). And in his fourth dream, Joseph is warned to go instead to Galilee rather than Judea ([Matthew 2:22](#)).

When these dreams are read in succession it is clear that Saint Joseph was attentive to the voice of God. We all have dreams, but Joseph's dreams were different. They were clear communications from God, and they required a willing recipient. Joseph was open to the voice of God and listened in faith as that willing recipient.

Joseph also responded with complete submission and full determination. The commands Joseph received were not insignificant. His obedience required that he and his family travel great distances, take up residence in strange lands, and do so all in faith.

It is also clear that Joseph took his vocation seriously. Pope Saint John Paul II gave him the title "Guardian of the Redeemer." Over and over, he showed his unwavering commitment to his role as the guardian of his legal Son, Jesus, and of his wife, Mary. His life was spent providing for them, protecting them, and offering them a father's heart.

- **Prayer to St Joseph**

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.



Wednesday, March 20, 2024

- **Readings**

- Daniel 3:13-20, 24, 49-50, 91-95 *Blessed be God who sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted him.*
- Responsorial *Canticle Daniel 3 Glory and Praise forever!*
- John 8:31-42 *If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*

- **Reflection**

Today Jesus says to the Jews who believed in Him, “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

Take a moment and ask yourself: Do you “remain in Jesus’ Word”? How do you do this? Do you take time to read the Scripture, the Gospels? More importantly, do you strive to embody Jesus’ Word? At times, it may be difficult to know what it means to remain in Jesus’ Word. Today I invite you to choose a phrase or sentence of this Gospel and slowly repeat the phrase or sentence aloud or in your mind for five to seven minutes.

After you have done this, sit quietly for another few minutes. When you are ready, open your eyes and thank Jesus for being with you today. Allow Jesus’ Word to remain in you throughout your day. You may realize that simply remaining in Jesus’ Word is the best gift you can give yourself and the world.

<http://ferdinandbenedictines.blogspot.com>

- **Prayer**

God our Saviour, give us the courage of your Son so that we may entrust our lives to You. When we feel frightened or alone, may we always feel you walking beside us. Through Christ, our Lord, AMEN.



Thursday, March 21, 2024

- **Readings**

- Genesis 17:3-9
- Psalm 105 *The Lord remembers His covenant forever.*
- John 8:51-59

- **Reflection**

- God establishes his covenant with Abraham. This experience marks a change in the relationship between God and humanity: God actually extends an invitation to be in an intimate, life-sharing relationship with his creatures. He does not remain far removed from us; He dwells with us -and eventually becomes one of us.

But this relationship is not something forced on us by God; it is an invitation. God waits for us to say “yes” or “no” to living this love story. God makes Himself vulnerable by giving us the opportunity to reject Him. What an extraordinary gift, that the Lord of the Universe humbles Himself in this way! As lent draws to a close, let's resolve to never reject Him.

-Henri Nouwen

- **Prayer** *God, you are the most important relationship in my life. Let me never lose sight of this. Let me never put anything or anyone above you. Amen.*



Friday, March 22, 2024



- **Readings**

- Jeremiah 20:7, 10-13++ *Praise the Lord who has delivered the life of the needy.*
- Psalm 18 *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.*
- John 10:31-42 *The Religious authorities tried to arrest Jesus, but he escaped.*

- **Reflection**

It demands a lot of courage and conviction from our side to stand by the truth. There may be times when we are not accepted for the good works we do as it happened in the case of Jesus. He went about doing well to everyone; but He was accused of making Himself equal to God. But Jesus knew well that His works were nothing but the works of His Father. The poor being protected, the blind seeing, the widow and the orphan being cared for, the prisoners being freed, etc..., were the works that always made the people of Israel recognize the presence of God in their midst. Still, they tried to find fault with Him and arrest Him. We need to be so vigilant that we do not fall prey to the evil by using our power to destroy the growth and goodness of others for the purpose of defending our interests.

Jesus says that if the people refuse to believe in His words, they should at least accept His deeds. The Lord is applying here the old saying that works speak louder than words. What we do, our deeds are much more telling than what we say.

There is a story of a dying elderly woman who had worked with the needy for 50 years. She expressed fear to her pastor who was at her bedside. "What will I tell the Master when I see Him?" The pastor replied, "Don't say anything, just show him your hands." Perhaps God is more impressed by the work of our hands than the sound of our voice. <https://refergospel.blogspot.com>

- **Prayer**

God, our Father, help us to discern the presence of Your Holy Spirit. Make us quick to commend people for the good they do, and keep us eager to participate in the movement of Your Spirit, Through Christ Our Lord, AMEN.

Saturday, March 23, 2024

- **Readings**

- Ezekiel 37:21-28 *I will make them one nation in the land.*
- Responsorial Psalm Jeremiah 31 *The Lord will guard us like a shepherd guarding his flock.*
- John 11:45-57 *Jesus gathered into one the dispersed children of God.*

- **Reflection**

Do you allow fear or opposition to hold you back from doing God's will? Jesus set his face like flint toward Jerusalem, knowing full well what awaited Him there. It was Jewish belief that when the high priest asked for God's counsel for the nation, God spoke through him. What dramatic irony that Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus must die for the nation. Jesus came to lay down His life for the many, but not in a foolish reckless manner so as to throw it away before his work was done. He retired until the time had come when nothing would stop His coming to Jerusalem to fulfill His Father's mission. The way to glory and victory for us is through the cross of Jesus Christ. Are you ready to take up your cross and follow Christ in His way of victory?

- **Prayer**

Almighty God cleanse our hearts so that we may accept the unity, justice, and peace that You bring through Your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, AMEN.

