

Monday, March 15, 2021

- **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 16, 2021

- **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 17, 2021

- **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**

This is a story of Ralph who struggled with his memory. He failed not only remembering names, but more significantly, important dates – his wife’s birthday and their wedding anniversary. He found a solution. He opened an account with a local florist. He provided it with dates as well as instructions to send flowers and a signed card, “your loving husband, Ralph.” It worked at first. Then one day, Ralph came home on their wedding anniversary. He saw the flowers on the dining room table and said, “What lovely flowers. Where did you get them?”

We can empathize with Ralph. We have probably been there. Fortunately, God does not forget us. He can’t. He loves us too much. We have heard of the luck of the Irish, but are fortunate to have a loving God who will never forget us.

Our prayer today is an Irish blessing in honor of St. Patrick.

- **Prayer**

*May there always be work for your hands to do.
May your purse always hold a coin or two.
May the sun always shine on your windowpane.
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you.
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you. AMEN.*

Thursday, March 18, 2021

- **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 *You accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope.*

- **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 19, 2021 – 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.

Saturday, March 20, 2021

- **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.

Sunday, March 21, 2021

- **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.