

## Monday, March 22, 2021

- **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 hastily 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 Your mercy at all times. Amen.*

## Tuesday, March 23, 2021

- **Readings**

- Numbers 21:4-9 *Whoever is bitten shall look at the bronze serpent and live.*
- Psalm 10 *O Lord hear my prayer and let my cry come to you.*
- John 8:21-30 *When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am He.*

- **Reflection**

It's said that when he was dying, St. Augustine asked that the Psalms be hung from the wall facing his bed. Famous for his years of flagrant sinning, Augustine sought the comfort of the Psalms as he prepared to meet God face to face. The Psalms ought to give us courage and confidence as we reflect on our own lives and on the struggles, sins, and "enemies" that afflict us. They teach us to plead without restraint, to hold nothing back in begging for God's mercy. This is not born of arrogance or overconfidence, but from a deep conviction that God is merciful and loves us like a parent.

Do you turn to the Lord with the kind of open, honest and passionate pleading we see in Psalm 102? Do you trust God enough to storm heaven's gates with your prayers? When praying we need to have an awareness of our sinfulness. If that is challenging, can you be patient with yourself and ask God for the gift of trust? When you pray, do you focus more on the chasm between your sin and God's goodness or on the ocean of God's mercy vs. your need? <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship>

- **Prayer**

*O Lord, feed your people with your grace, and deliver our souls from the death of sin.*

*Fill us with your mercy, that we may be united with the joys of the righteous, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Wednesday, March 24, 2021

- **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 25, 2021 - Annunciation of the Lord

- **Readings**

- Isaiah 7:10-14, 8, 10d *The virgin shall conceive.*
- Psalm 40 *Here I am, I come to do your will.*
- Hebrews 10:4-10 *As it is written of me in the scroll of the book: See, God, I have come to do your will.*
- Luke 1:26-38 *Mary, you will conceive and bear a son.*

- **Reflection**

Today, we celebrate the Annunciation, when the Angel announced to Mary that she was to bear a son by the Holy Spirit and his name is to be Emmanuel, "God is with us!". Let us do what Mary did, open ourselves to that Presence.

Was the annunciation just an afternoon visit from a well-dressed young man? Or might it be saying that the Presence of her God was so real and she was so receptive that the Word which was speaking to her in prayer, was able to become even more real, becoming flesh within her?

And she consented.

Mary permitted the embodiment of God, the most extraordinary event since the inception of the universe. So I ask, Am I able to make this a blueprint for my response to God? Will Jesus be made present in me, differently from Mary, but nonetheless real? Will my eyes, voice, hands, and feet bring Jesus wherever I go, and to whomever, I meet?

Can I, too, embody Jesus? <https://www.catholicvoice.org.au>

- **Prayer**

*Son of the Most High, may we welcome what angels announce to us. May we walk wherever you lead us. May we climb upon the crosses that confront us, joining you, who live and reign with God, the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever, AMEN.*

## Friday, March 26, 2021

- **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 27, 2021

- **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.

## Sunday, March 28, 2021 - The Passion of Our Lord

- **Readings**

- Mark 11:1-10 *Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.*
- Isaiah 50:4-7 *I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.  
I know that I shall not be put to shame.*
- Psalm 22 *My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*
- Philippians 2:6-11 *Jesus humbled himself. Therefore, God highly exalted him.*
- Mark 14:1-15:47 *The Passion of our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

- **Reflection**

We who are familiar with the Gospels may suffer, at times, from a certain indifference to the sufferings of Christ. We hear the story read each year, have seen many images of the Passion, and as a result of this familiarity, we can fail to allow it to have the proper effect on our lives. But the Passion is real, it happened, and we should give it our full attention. Though it may not be pleasant, on one level, it is an act of love so mysterious that it requires much grace to enable us to penetrate its meaning and significance in our lives. Every scourge, ridicule, nail and thorn wounded not only our Lord's body, but it caused excruciating pain to His soul. But every pain that He endured He took into His Heart and redeemed it, offering it to the Father for the salvation of all. We must see this great mystery of our faith and gaze upon it in awe and holy wonder.

Have you gazed upon the suffering Jesus? Have you allowed yourself to see His pain and His suffering? Have you seen Him endure all in silence and acceptance? Reflect upon this incredible mystery of our faith this day and allow yourself to grow in love and compassion for Him who endured so much for you. Know that His suffering destroyed the effects of sin and transformed suffering itself into the instrument of His Divine Mercy. <https://divinemeracy.life>

- **Prayer**

*Precious Lord, I thank You for Your suffering. For in this act You took human suffering into Your glorious soul and redeemed it. You endured the effects of my sin and said not a word. Lord, You paid the price for my sins and You did so with perfect love and resolve. Give me the grace, dear Lord, to embrace all that I suffer and to unite it to the redeeming power of Your holy Cross. In that unity, free me from my sins and pour forth Your abundance of Mercy. Jesus, I trust in You.*