



ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL

2010

LENTEN

DEVOTIONS

PRAYER, MEDITATION & STUDY

MAKING JESUS CHRIST KNOWN IN ALL THAT WE DO

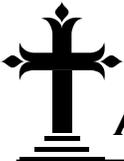


During the Season of Lent, we are called to prepare ourselves spiritually for the events of Holy Week. During Holy Week, we hear again with fresh ears the triumphal entry of our Lord, the New Passover meal in the Upper Room, and the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To prepare for the remembrance of these incredible events, we are called to additional prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study. Each day during Lent, set aside additional time to spend with God. In prayer, meditation, and study of God's Word, we can each prepare ourselves for a truly "Holy" Week.

It is our hope that the meditations prepared in the Devotion Book will be a Word from God to each of us. Each meditation was prepared prayerfully by a different member of the parish. I pray that these words will speak to your heart and help you in the observance of a holy Lent as well.

The Very Reverend Ryan Reed
Dean of St. Vincent's Cathedral
Bedford, Texas



ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH

REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

The tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Luke 18:13

Lent is a penitential season of fasting, prayer, and self-denial. Our emphasis for these next forty days will be upon repentance and forgiveness. We are called to recognize and confess our sins, to ask God's forgiveness and mercy, and to pray for grace to amend our lives according to His will. It means being changed by a daily pattern of repentance, forgiveness, and amendment of life.

In today's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, Jesus contrasts two very different spiritual attitudes in our relationship with God. The first is one of pride, self-righteousness, and superiority. The Pharisee reminds God that he is a good and pious man, better than others. The tax collector, on the other hand, knows he is a sinful man, undeserving of God's forgiveness and love. In sadness and humility, he throws himself upon the mercy of the Lord. Jesus concludes with a central teaching that runs throughout the entire Bible: "Every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (verse 14)

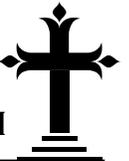
Lent is a time to grow in humility. First, it requires daily self-examination and confession, as we acknowledge our faults and failures before God. Second, it requires contrition, an expression of our sorrow for the things we have done and left undone. Then we resolve to do better, as we ask for God's strength and help to amend our lives, and we offer ourselves as channels of His love and forgiveness in our interactions with others.

Several times a day throughout this Lent, make a habit of repeating an ancient prayer that comes to us from the Eastern Orthodox tradition called the Jesus Prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me a sinner. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me a sinner. Lord Jesus Christ. . ."

The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker
Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth

Psalms 32, 102, 130, 143; Amos 5:6-15; Hebrews 12:1-14; Luke 18:9-14



Why Does He Get Away with It?

"Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither like green plants they will soon die away." Psalm 37: 1-18.

Many times in our lives an injustice is done to us. Our first reaction is, why me? How could he do such a thing? We want revenge.. We want the other party to hurt as much as us. Later, we wonder why does this party continue to do these things and get away with it? We are still carrying and harboring the pain and anger.

We need to stop and remember God is there for us. We need to give our frustrations to him and know that the evil doers will pay in time—God's time.

"Be still and know that I am God."

Amy Brock
Kindergarten Teacher

Psalms 37:1-18, 19-42; Habakkuk 3:1-18; Philippians 3:12-21; John 17:1-8



Imitating God's Humility

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer, and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6

Euodia and Syntyche were two women who are named in the book of Philippians. As members of the church in Philippi, Paul refers to them as "loyal yokefellow" who had fought along with him for the cause of the gospel. Also, their names are in the book of life because they believed in Christ. However, during their journey, they lost their focus. In this letter to Philippi, Paul tactfully pleaded with them to agree with each other and not lose sight of their purpose.

As members of the church, we learn to become united and support one another not only by Christian example, but also with fellowship and brotherly love. During the Lenten season, we are encouraged to lose something valuable in order to show our loyalty to God. What is a far more difficult journey is to replace damaging thought patterns such as anxiety, worry, and self-centeredness with prayer, thanksgiving, and selflessness. It builds our foundation for spreading the gospel. The beauty is that virtuous thinking exercises can be put in practice and become wholesome thought patterns and habits.

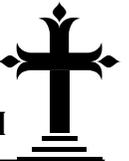
As we travel toward the nearness of our Lord, let us understand the influence of thoughts on our lives. We may need to stop and carry someone along the way, but when we do, we imitate God's love and care. A combination of committing our love to God can give us the inner tranquility we desperately seek, producing a life of spiritual life.

Our Father in Heaven,

Thank you for giving us the gift of love and the power of the Holy Spirit to help us spread that love throughout your creation. Please take our worries and help us to replace them with peace so that we may serve you in the way you intended. Dear Father, please grant us the grace we seek from you at all times. AMEN.

Sherry Heiser
Guidance Counselor

Psalms 31, 35, 95; Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Philippians 4:1-9; John 17:9-19



“To Love Another Person is to See the Face of God” – Victor Hugo

“The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.” John 17:22-23

As children, we are taught to “love our neighbors as ourselves”; however, we do not fully comprehend the spiritual weight of that action. We are taught that God is Love, and so Love is something entirely holy. Additionally, we are taught that Love is a union, whether between spouses, siblings, parent and child, or friends. Therefore, Love is the most holy union possible, no matter the relationship.

In the above passage, Jesus states that He gave us His glory so that we would become one with one another. In other words, so that we can love each other, thus creating a holy union. By creating this holy union, we can become one with God, and see that the Lord sent His Son purely for the reason of saving us.

The logical spiritual conclusion is that our connection with God is not measured purely by our deeds and spiritual relationship with God, but also by our spiritual kinship with each other. Without each other, we cannot understand our relationship with God. By loving each other, we can learn to appreciate God’s love for us. And by understanding his love, we understand his illogical conclusion to save a world of sinners.

Lord, thank you for Love. May it give us understanding and insight into our relationships, our salvation, and our own souls. AMEN.

Anonymous
College Student

Psalms 30, 32, 42, 43; Ezekiel 39:21-29; Philippians 4:10-20; John 17:20-26



Proclamation from Jesus

*"I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life."
John 12:49*

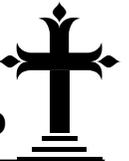
In this passage Jesus cries out that when man believes in him and the words that he speaks, that he believes in everything that is God. Also at the same time he is saying that if man does not believe in what he speaks, he does not believe in God. Jesus speaks that he is not here to judge man, but to be the savior. The judgment is up to God. Jesus explains that he is just the messenger, speaking and teaching the words that were given to him by God.

We tend to listen to Jesus' words and believe in him, but not the words. The only reason for that is because we feel that his teachings have nothing to do with today's society, which is completely false. The words that he spoke that were from God will be up to date for all ages and eras to come.

Father in Heaven, help us to read and learn your words to get knowledge of God through your words spoken through Jesus, so that we may be able to get to that heavenly place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal with You. AMEN.

Daniel C. Frey
Trinity High School Senior

Psalm 63:1-11, 98, 103; Daniel 9:3-10; Hebrews 2:10-18; John 12:44-50



In The Wilderness

"And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him." Mark 1: 13

Yes, we are baptized, and the Holy Spirit has come upon us, and lives within us, and God is pleased with us because we live within Jesus Christ. But, we also live in the wilderness with the wild beasts and are tempted by Satan constantly.

Most of us at some time will shrug off the call to do our chores, being kind to our brothers and sisters, minding our parents and honoring them. We want to retaliate against those that speak ill about us, call us names, and talk about us behind our backs, We are angered at those who are our friends and yet have turned against us. Jealousy and envy over-take us when we don't have all that we desire. Pride is our enemy.

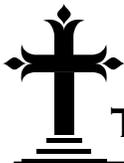
Our wilderness is much like what our Lord lived in and experienced during his 33 years among us. He knows our need for mercy, patience, security, forgiveness, and blessings. Blessings we do not deserve and cannot earn. Our Lord loves us out of grace.

Angels ministered to Christ Jesus in the wilderness, and his Spirit ministers to us, and we minister others.

Dear Lord Jesus, Give us your love, wisdom, and the power to speak out about your grace. Thank you for sustaining us with your abiding love while we live in our wilderness. Help us to use your guidance to serve others. AMEN.

Nancylee Staggs
Teacher/Counselor

Psalm 41, 42, 44; Genesis 37:1-19, 1 Corinthians 1:1-19, Mark 1:1-13



The saved are not the wise, but those who believe

"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
1 Corinthians 1:20-31.

What is important? People wrestle with this question daily & priorities probably move around a lot in our daily lives. Is it getting to a meeting on time? Making more money than someone we envy? Being right? Proving that you're right? Or simply, winning?

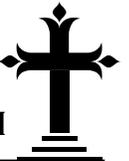
If we slow down, and get beyond the daily noise and distractions, most of us probably shift scope & think of family. After a bit more time & pondering, we might consider where God fits in our list of important things. Finding the right place at the top of the list isn't really that hard when you think it through. But it the many distractions in our world can make it hard to focus and actually recognize the importance of belief in God.

As I read this letter from Paul to the Corinthians, the Greeks tended to place too much of a priority on wisdom, to the point where wisdom became too important. You might even argue they made wisdom about God more important than God. I'm no theologian, but Paul's core message in this passage looks simple. There's no test, no series of verbal or logical hoops to leap through to achieve salvation. If you keep belief in God & his love first in you heart, your other priorities will sort themselves out.

Dear God in heaven, thank you for these words of guidance. Please give this imperfect man enough wisdom to discern your will, and the courage to act in your service. AMEN

Bob Thornton
IT Project Manager

Psalm 45 pm 47, 48; Genesis 37: 12-24; 1 Corinthians 1: 20 – 31: Mark 1: 14-28



The Feast of St. Matthias, the Apostle.

Mark 5 : 1 – 20

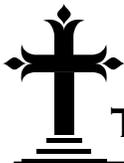
The story of the Gerasene demoniac is one of the most dramatic exorcisms in all of Scripture. Here a man has been tormented by a host of evil spirits, which collectively call themselves "Legion". Their victim engages in self-destructive behavior, bruising himself with stones. He also lashes out at those who would help him. His spiritual afflictions have made him fit only to live amidst tombs. He is for all practical purposes, dead to all that is lovely and good in the world of men due to the predations of the spiritual forces of darkness.

In this the demoniac is like the rest of us. None of us is free from spiritual attack by the forces of wickedness. And under their influence, we, too, engage in anti-social and self-destructive behavior at times. There is no health in us that springs from ourselves.

Yet we may be freed from our bondage to sin and stand before us this Lent, and the demons of Hell that torment us tremble just as the Legion did. They know the power of the Son of God to set us free. As we observe this season of repentance let us continually invoke the words of Christ, "Come out, you unclean spirit!" and drive the darkness from our souls. And let us, as Christ frees us from our bondage, tell others about. Jesus told the demoniac that he must "tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And the man went out and told the world how much Jesus had done for them. For Jesus is God's mercy at work in the world for liberation and peace, and we must never cease to give thanks for all He has done for us to set us free. And we must let the entire earth resound with His praise.

Father Randall Foster
St. Vincent's Cathedral School Chaplain

Psalm 15; Acts 1:15-26; Philippians 3:13-21; John 15:1, 6-16



What is on your foundation?

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is in Jesus Christ" 1 Corinthians 3:11

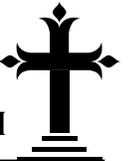
The foundation of all of our lives is Jesus. There are times in all of our lives that we don't believe that. However, the fact that through God's grace he sent Jesus to live as one of us, die as one of us and sacrifice himself for us makes Jesus the foundation for all that we do (even during tough stretches when we may not believe that to be true).

This verse is very powerful to me in that it calls each one of us to the service of the Lord. Just like we would want to build the finest house on the finest foundation; if Jesus is the foundation of our lives, then we should want to build our finest life on His foundation. We build that life by offering ourselves and our lives to God by utilizing the gifts that He gave us for His purposes.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace so that the lives we build on the foundation of your Son, Jesus Christ, may glorify you.

Rick Ward
Mission Team Member

Psalms 19, 46, 50, 59, 60; Genesis 39:1-23; 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15;
Mark 2:1-12



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

Sayeth the Lord: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will arise." Mark 10:33-34.

Some messages are so very hard to hear. Imagine how hard it was for the Twelve to hear these words from Jesus, foretelling his torture and death. So much easier to have given in to the distractions of everyday life and to have lost focus on the most important thing—the ordeal to come and the victory of Jesus' resurrection.

Today, worldly stimuli bombard us with distraction. Look at me! Buy this! Attend to me! We feel pulled apart, depleted. Yes, the world will use up our personal resources and suck dry our energy. Psalm 22 captures the notion of the world as thief, stealing our time, dividing our attention, and leaving us separated from God and His love for us. "Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them and for my raiment they cast lots." (Psalm 22:16-18).

It is now, during Lent, that we are reminded that God is close and the most important thing is about to happen. With this in mind we may redouble our efforts to maintain our Lenten discipline, gathering the strength to shrug off the world's many encumbrances and focus our bodies, minds, hearts, and souls on Jesus' death and resurrection.

Lord God, "Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me, and from the snares of evildoers! Let the wicked together fall into their own nets, while I escape." AMEN. Psalms 141:9-10.

Warren T. Jackson
Psychologist

Psalm 95, 22, 141, 143:1-12; Exodus 9:13-35; 2 Corinthians 4:1-12;
Mark 10:32-45



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH

*"Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God".
1 Corinthians 4: 5*

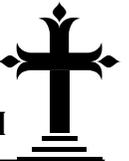
In this letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul reminds us to refrain from passing judgment on each other. As humans, we have only limited insight and experience gleaned from our short-term, myopic earthly experience. Despite our limited understanding, we have a tendency to assume self-imposed authority over others, applying man made laws and exercising judgment without any comprehension of the human soul. St. Paul sends us a critical message, emphasizing that only God is in a position to understand the motive of a man's heart.

Beyond St. Paul's basic message, I believe, lies a statement of faith. All men have the inherent ability to build upon their faith, and to rectify past wrongs. By passing immediate earthly judgment on others, we make a decision based on limited understanding, and also assume that our actions and those of others are frozen in time. Through free will, not only do we have the ability to turn away from the Lord, we also have the ability to repent and return to the Lord, up until the final judgment day. St. Paul reminds us of this foundation of our faith, pointing to the fact that our Lord's patience, love, and understanding is far greater than what we can ever comprehend here on earth. We must keep the faith in God's love, and His ability to restore faith in all of us, right up until the final judgment day, when He comes again.

As we meditate on St. Paul's letter, we must remind ourselves to accept the fact that we are not, and should not be in control. Only God has the full understanding of our heart, mind, and soul. We are simply caretakers of an earthly body that will enjoy the heavenly rewards our Lord has reserved for us at the end of time.

Mark Jeffers
Sales Training Manager

Psalms 55,138, 139:1-23; Genesis 41: 1-13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7;
Mark 2:23 – 3:6



Seek a New Life in Christ

"We are buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4

Paul is speaking to the Romans about the resurrection of Jesus and doing away with the old life and starting a new one. Without the belief in the resurrection of Jesus, we will not have freedom from sin. Through our baptism we have said goodbye to our former existence.

Everyone at some point in their life would like a second chance or a "do over". We say things we regret, we fail to help a friend or we end up going down a path that we spend years trying to back track. How can we get ourselves back on track?

God gives us the ability to have the ultimate second chance. Through our belief in the resurrection of Christ, our lives will be eternal and free of sin. If we fail to recognize the incredible gift of Christ's crucifixion and his resurrection, our lives will not change.

Father in Heaven, thank you for the gift of Christ's resurrection. Without the sacrifice of your only son, our lives would be in darkness. Please continue to give us the grace and guide us as we seek our new life in Christ. AMEN.

Carey Ebert
Attorney



MONDAY, MARCH 1ST

TO WHICH SPIRIT ARE YOU A SERVANT?

In the readings today, we gain insight into the real life situations of four men walking in the Spirit to confront elements of human failings. Joseph interpreted through the Spirit what Pharaoh's dream meant and took action to ensure the people of Egypt would survive in the face famine. Joseph overcame slavery and a lost family. David took refuge in conversation with God, his protector, while facing his enemies. He leaned on the presence of God to sustain his faith for deliverance. Paul rebuked the divisive pride and politics of the church he established and called the church back to the vision of who their true priest was – Christ Jesus. Jesus himself silenced the evil spirits from shouting out who he really was so that the popular misconception of his being a worldly ruler would not be reinforced. Jesus controlled the situation by calling upon his Father in Heaven to reveal His true nature through healing those afflicted. He avoided the message being distorted by diversion into the religious and national politics of the time.

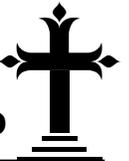
Not much has changed over 3000 years. We all have a constant struggle to keep our thoughts and actions focused on God's Will. We cannot do that unless we are in touch with God. God's Spirit answers back if we listen and keeps us mindful of the other ever-present spirits that work to divert our attention away from being servants of our High Priest, Jesus Christ. Listening for the Spirit of God to guide us is essential. As my grandfather used to say, "That is why we have two ears and only one mouth."

Dear Father, teach us to be ever mindful of Your presence in us through Your Holy Spirit. Keep us focused on Your Will throughout our day and bring into our minds the guidance of Your servants from ages past so that we too may always serve You and have victory over evil. AMEN.

Blessings to your family this Lenten Season,

Don Bendure
Insurance Consultant

Psalms 56, 57; Genesis 41: 46 – 57; 1 Corinthians 4: 8 – 29; Mark 3: 7 - 19



SEEING THE LORD

"It is well seen, O God, how thou goest : how thou, my God and King, goest in the sanctuary. The singers go before, the minstrels follow after : in the midst are the damsels playing with the timbrels." Psalm 68: 24-25 (Coverdale translation)

These verses describe a procession entering the Temple, perhaps sung while the Ark itself was carried around. In Psalm 24, another procession of the Ark is described, with the choir petitioning to be admitted to the Temple with the words "Lift up your heads, O ye gates! And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." The "King of glory" was Israel's God, whose presence was associated with the Ark.

C. S. Lewis says that when the Psalmists speak of "seeing" the Lord, or long to "see" Him, most of them mean something that happened to them in the Temple. Rereading the verses of Psalm 68 above, it is almost as if the psalmist said, "Look, here He comes."

In today's world, it is all too easy to see our rites, processions, and music as ends in themselves, but they are intended to assist us in seeing a vision of God and feeling the presence of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Father in heaven, help us to "see" you and feel your presence in every act of worship, "to behold the fair beauty of the Lord." AMEN.

Barbara Burton
Music Director at St. Vincent's

Psalm 61, 62, 68; Genesis 42: 1-17; 1 Corinthians 5: 1-8; Mark 3: 19b-35



The Light of my Path

"May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word. I know, O Lord, that your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness you have afflicted me." Psalm 119:74-75

From Dictionary.com the definition of afflicted is "to distress with mental or bodily pain; trouble greatly or grievously." As I was reading this passage this word "afflicted" really struck a chord with me. Ever since I was young I have always said and felt whole-heartedly that I was (and this is to quote my father) "plagued with responsibility." Since I can remember I have always felt the need to be responsible for everyone and everything to the point that oftentimes I have made decisions that didn't necessarily have an ultimately pleasing outcome for me personally. Thus the phrase "plagued with responsibility" bounces around in my head on a daily basis. Shouldn't this be true, though, not just of me, but also of all Christians?

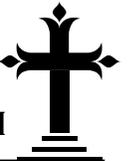
The beauty of this passage lies in the beginning. What an amazing sight it would be to see nonbelievers, skeptics, and others who fear the truth of the word rejoice upon seeing you! Not Jesus or Mary or John, but you, an everyday average Joe. Everyday I attempt to strive for exactly this. My greatest hope is that someone who is lost will "see" the glory of the word when they see me. Now as beautiful a sentiment as this may seem, it isn't (I believe) that some light will shine from me as I walk through the mall, for instance. However, here is where the affliction comes into the scenario. I believe that the light only shines through my actions. Everyday I am called and given the opportunity to DO something for someone. That is what makes me a Christian and my faith is what keeps me doing for others whether or not I am busy, tired, feeling out of sorts, or just having a bad day. afflicted. Being a faithful Christian today is very difficult. We are pulled in so many directions, being forced to "show proof" of our faith, being called to set aside our beliefs to make everyone feel good about themselves, etc. My faith is the only thing that keeps me grounded amid all the conflict.

Plagued with responsibility. I now think it will be joined by this new phrase "in faithfulness you have afflicted me."

Father, help me everyday to remain faithful in all I do and to remember that your word is my light. May I carry that light in my heart to guide me & may it shine brightly for others to see. In your name I pray. AMEN

Kathleen Siek
Stay-at-home Mom

Psalms 72, 119:73-96; Genesis 42:18-28; 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:8; Mark 4:1-20



*10 For my enemies speak against me;
those who wait to kill me conspire together.
14 But as for me, I will always have hope;
I will praise you more and more.
15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness,
of your salvation all day long,
though I know not its measure. Psalm 71*

This psalm and this time of year humble me when I consider how grave the danger was for Jesus and how he, under so much pressure and pain, never wavered in his faith and purpose. As Christians in this day and time we are all tested frequently and asked to relinquish our faith more and more to modern ways that conflict with Christian teachings.

When I fall short on the lesser trials, I can't help but wonder about how I'd handle the larger ones? "But as for me, I will always have hope"...and gain comfort to know that I don't have to rely on myself alone. I have the collective strength of this parish and extended Christian family and our savior, Jesus Christ.

Dear Lord, thank you for this parish and for your son, Jesus Christ. Please give us the strength and courage to serve and praise you without ceasing. AMEN.

Brandi Jones
Program Manager, Travelocity



WHO IS THIS JESUS?

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side. "And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Mark 4: 35-41

In Genesis 1 the Scriptures say the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. In Job, only God commands the seas and the waters; it is only God who tramples on the waves of the sea. In Exodus God alone could part the waters of the Red Sea to deliver his people. In the Psalms, God alone is the one who gathered the waters of the sea as in a heap.

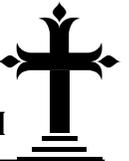
By rebuking the wind and the waves, as when he walked upon the waters in Matthew 14 and trampled upon them, Jesus demonstrated what only God could do: he spoke and the Creation obeyed. The question for the disciples was indeed, "Who then is this?"

Who then, is this Jesus? Was he just a "great moral teacher" or is the one who had authority over the demonic world, healed the sick, cleansed the leper, and gave sight to the blind something more? Is he not Emmanuel, God with us?

Dear Lord, please strengthen our faith when the wind blows and calm the seas that rage around us. Please save this nation, our families, and friends. Be with our bishop and clergy. Lead them to always declare the truth of your Scriptures and lead us into a deeper understanding of you as you hover over the waters that surround us. AMEN.

Bret Coody, JD
Contract Administration

Psalms 69, 73, 95; Genesis 1:1-15; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9; Mark 4:35-41



ACCEPTING THE WILL OF CHRIST

"... they were afraid. ... and those who had seen it told what had happened. ... and they began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood." Mark 5: 12 - 17

Jesus has just performed a great miracle in the land of the Gerasenes, saving from madness and self-destruction one of their number that was thought to be beyond redemption. The possibilities for us if we accept the miracles of Christ are truly wondrous – salvation, grace, becoming more like Him, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us.

But how frightening the prospect! We long for the familiar, the safe, and the easily understood. Can I live like that? I can't live like that! No one really lives like that! How will others perceive me? What will I have to sacrifice? How can I have the strength? The courage?

Surrendering ourselves to the change that can be wrought in our lives by Christ is difficult. Our fears, our desires, and the world in which we live militate against it. Lent's discipline helps us to perceive and understand our rejection of grace. Through Lent's ending we see again the joy that comes from acceptance and obedient surrender to God's will.

Gracious God, grant me the strength and courage to accept the grace and purpose of the Holy Spirit in my own life. AMEN.

Grant Whittenberg
High School Teacher

Psalms 23, 27, 75, 76; Genesis 43:16-34; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24; Mark 5: 1-20



SUNDAY, MARCH 7TH

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

In this noisy world in which we live, we have all learned to filter out the sounds and the voices which call incessantly for our attention. Thus, we may find it difficult to hear God's voice, but what He has to say is something which we need to hear.

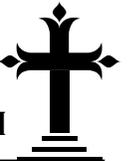
"Verily, verily," He says, "I say unto you..." And then, Jesus tells us that when we come to know Him, He gives to us a new life: a resurrection here and now. And then, it continues even beyond the grave.

Even though we live in a time and in a society filled with constant changes, God's voice and His unending love tell us that His salvation is permanent both in this life and beyond the grave. We must only focus on Him: we must hear Him.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for Your love and for Your sacrificial death on the cross. You speak to us through Your written word and through Your faithful servants who surround us and listen for Your voice and hear what you say to us. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, AMEN.

James R. Moore
Retired Minister

Psalm 34, 93, 96; Genesis 44:1-17; Romans 8:1-10; John 5:25-2



RESTORATION and LOVE

*"Restore us, O God; make your face shine among us that we might be saved."
Psalm 80:3*

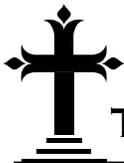
Most of these scriptures speak of God using other people to display His power to heal and restore good health and positive relationships. Every day of our life we are in need of God's restoration. By omission or commission we hurt, injure, and abuse our fellow man on a daily basis. We are too busy with our own agendas to see the needs of anyone around us, sometimes including people living under the same roof!

Is your face showing the light of Christ? Are others drawn to you, as you emanate love, compassion and acceptance? Or are others being repelled by your sour expression and your "hurry up and get out of my way" attitude? God can restore peace and harmony to our harried lives. All we have to do is ask.

Dear God, please direct and guide my path today, so that everywhere I go and everyone I see may see Jesus' face shining back at them.

A.J. Wolery Blood
Counselor

Psalms 77, 79, 80; Genesis 44:18-34; 1 Corinthians 7:25-31; Mark 5:21-43



TUESDAY, MARCH 9TH

GOD IN OUR LIVES

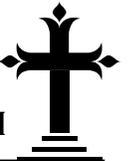
At my age, I feel so inadequate to give my opinion to others in what I believe. But one thing I am sure in living this life is that when you put God first in everything you do and say, no matter the outcome, He is there to help you through it. Love heals so many hurts when you put God first; others second and yourself last. All kinds of wonderful things begin to happen. When we are directed by God and not ourselves in marriage, raising children or just living, we can look around and see how blessed we are in being one of his children.

When I go up to the alter to receive communion, I think of all that has happened since the last time and give it to the Lord for forgiveness. Then I start out fresh again to try harder to please him and others.

Lord help us do your will! Give us the strength and courage to understand and work to make this a place for you to call "Your Own." AMEN

Lois Virginia Hadley
Retired clergy wife

Psalm 78; Genesis 45:1-15; 1 Corinthians 7:32-40; Mark 6:1-13



"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

The psalmist refers to the Word of God as a lamp to my feet. There is no mention of light to the eyes so that we may see our way; nor of light to knowledge or understanding that we may know where we are going or figure it out on our own. In Holy Scripture, God's sacred, revealed writings, light is shed on the way we are to go. The Bible is our map, compass, and Guide--our internal GPS, giving us direction and purpose, guiding our conscience, warning of danger, and celebrating life in an unceasing companionship with the unseen Christ always and ever-present with us.

It is our **path** that receives the light, signifying we are each on a journey. It is not only a journey of living life with family, friends, neighbors and co-workers, but a more important, personal journey each of us must travel individually with Christ, to Christ and for Christ. Christ has given us life, light and Himself. What will we give back to Him for all He has given us?

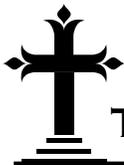
Our path, our journey, requires movement on our part. It is easier to stay where we are, being confident in who we are, knowing our surroundings and enjoying the moment. I believe God wants and expects much more from us and waits for our response.

In trusting and following, which is our response, we step out beyond what we know, and where we are. In our action, not just our listening or believing; we put one foot in front of the other, and respond to God. We allow ourselves to move ahead--to become the people God designed and desires us to be. To take the next step in faith and trust, we NEED the light of God's Holy Word to lead us along the right paths. In order to know God and His Word, we must spend time with God and His Word. We must continually refresh our memory by reading and digesting scripture so we do not forget who we are and Whose we are! We cannot be light in this world if we do not read, learn and follow the light given to us, the Light of Christ.

Almighty God, you have given us your Holy Word to be our light and guide so that we may know you, love you and serve you in this life and the next. Keep us ever mindful of your desire to speak to us and with us through your Word in scripture and your Word in Christ Jesus. Inspire us to seek your wisdom, look to your light and walk with you faithfully along your path in our lives, for the sake of your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Cindy Crook
Floral Designer

Psalms 81, 82, 119:97-120; Genesis 45:16-28; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13;
Mark 6:13-29



GOD'S THREE EASY STEPS TO CURING ANXIETY

"And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied." Mark 6:41-42.

The feeding of the 5000 is the only one of Jesus' miracles that is recorded in all four gospels. In the telling of the miracle, I see a cure for dealing with today's anxiety. Prior to the gathering, blessing, and distribution of the bread and fish, the disciples were concerned about the hour growing late and the crowd needing food. Their first suggestion was to send the crowd out to fend for themselves. It was Jesus who told the disciples to feed the crowd. Their next solution was to go and buy bread to feed the crowd. It was Jesus who told them to see how much food was available on site.

As I read and re-read this selection, three things stand out: first, it was the disciples who were anxious about the physical hunger and hence the material need of the crowd; second, that Jesus was calm and told the disciples to look for available resources; and third, was Jesus' blessing of the resources.

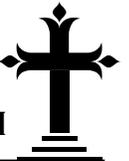
Today we are living in anxious times. Every one of us, either directly or indirectly has felt the effects of the economic crisis that has fallen on our country. Many of us are dealing with present day health issues as well as the issue of providing health care for ourselves and our families in the future. An even bigger cause of anxiety is the issue of national security and will there even be a future?

What are we to do? Should we dismiss the issues and hope someone else takes care of the problem? Mark 6:36 "Send them away, to go into the country and villages round about and buy themselves something to eat." Should we try to buy satisfaction and security with money and credit, committing as yet unearned dollars? Mark 6:38 says, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" Or should we choose to follow the example Jesus set and use the resources God has provided? We all possess God-given talents and great abundance in this life that we often overlook. Prayerfully, step back and study the big picture, with God's guidance give issues proper priorities and develop a plan of action using the gifts and resources God has provided. Lay the plan before God and ask for His blessing on the plan in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In closing, Philippians 4:6 tells us "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." And then as Psalm 37:7 says, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."

Linda Littlefield
Retail Management

Psalms 42, 43, 83, 85, 86; Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34; 1 Corinthians 9:1-15; Mark 6: 30-46



OUR GREAT PROTECTOR

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings, you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." Psalm 91:4

Psalm 91 makes reference to the Lord as the Most High, the Almighty, our refuge, and our fortress. These references are synonymous with strength, power, and protection.

In life, we may find ourselves in situations which make us feel fearful, powerless, and despondent. It is difficult to think positive in the midst of turmoil. It is then that we must draw on our faith for strength.

If we can just remember that the Lord shields us with his protective outreach just as a bird protects its young under its wings, we can then know that whatever adverse situation befalls us, the Lord will see us through it. When we look to Him, we can rest assured that he will command his angels to guard us in all our ways.

Dear Lord, thank you for always being my great protector. Let me never forget that I can always count on you to help me deal with life's challenges, whatever they may be. Strengthen my faith so that I will never doubt your presence in whatever circumstances I may encounter in my life. I ask this in Jesus' name. AMEN.

Marion Goethe
Retired

Psalms 88, 91, 92, 95; Genesis 47:1-26; 1 Corinthians 9:16-27; Mark 6:47-56



SATURDAY, MARCH 13TH

Jesus said "Good things will happen to the meek. One day the earth will be theirs." *Matthew 5:15*

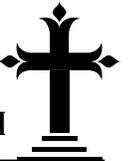
Psalm 37: 1-18 guides us to not become upset or jealous with people who are evil or who get ahead by doing wrong. We are to understand that in time, these people will not succeed, they will be cut off as green plant, and grass dry up and die out.

If we trust in the Lord, do as he would have us do and serve Him with joy, He will take care of us. What we desire may not come in our time but if we wait patiently, good things will come in the Lord's time.

While we wait, we may see others who are dishonest, deceitful or do terrible things succeed. If we become angry it will lead only to difficulty or trouble for us. The actions of evil people will be their own undoing; those who are honest, serve others faithfully and have patience, in God's time, will inherit eternity and his rewards will be everlasting.

Kerry Watts
Teacher and mother of Michaela and Kalie

Psalms 87, 90, 136; Genesis 47:27-48:7; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13;
Mark 7:1-23



Jesus is Eternal Life

"And this is the will of him who sent me, which I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:39-40.

In Chapter Six, Christ feeds five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes. Thereupon the people would have made him king; but withdrawing himself, he walks on the sea to his disciples; reproves the people flocking after him, and all the human hearers of his word; and declares himself to be the bread of life to believers.

God's will is that all who come to his Son, following and abiding in him, shall receive eternal and everlasting life, and that on the resurrection day that Christ shall raise them from the grave. These verses indicate that the will of the Father applies to every one who believes in the Son. The condition of eternal life is a faith that leads to and makes him the Lord of the soul and that Christ has brought to light immortality. Thus, He is the resurrection and the life.

Have you ensured eternal life for yourself? Accepting Jesus into your heart and making him Lord of your life and actions is the way to receiving everlasting life for yourself.

Almighty God, gracious Father, I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that He died on the cross and that His blood was shed for my sins. I ask you to forgive me of all my sins, past and present. Help me to obey your teachings as recorded in Holy Scripture. I ask Jesus to come into my heart and be my Savior and my Lord so that I shall have everlasting life in Him; through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN.

Ron Turner

Curriculum Developer

Psalms 19, 46, 66, 67; Genesis 48:8-22; Romans 8:11-25; John 6:27-40



CHOOSING GRACE

"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." 1 Corinthians 10:24

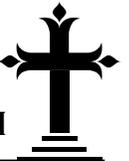
Paul's words are clarifying for us "the main thing." What a lesson in grace! But does it encourage a masochistic attitude? If I always "turn the other cheek," aren't I colluding with weakness? Maybe, if our perspective is determined by our human limitations. But there is the option of taking the circumstances to the higher level. In order to seek the good in my neighbor, as Paul exhorts, I must first seek what is available inside myself. That, we pray, will be the fruits of the Spirit. With that inner strength the good of my neighbor becomes possible.

It is of some use to follow all the rules and regulations a "religion" can impose. But the "rules and regulations" are meaningless (fruitless) unless we keep the number one commandment that Jesus taught "love your neighbor as yourself." Our tendency is to pray for grace. What Paul recommends is that we reach for it as a higher choice.

Lord, thank you for the teachings of scripture. Thank you for loving us in our folly. We make things more difficult when we fail to live in the constant grace of Your love and strength. When we choose the higher option, we receive You. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

Rosemary Bell
Clinical Counselor

Psalms 89; Genesis 49:1-28; 1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1; Mark 7:24-37



He asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven." . . . and they ate and were satisfied. And there were about four thousand people. Mark 8:1-10.

We all know the story of this miracle. As I read this and saw in my mind all of the people sitting on the hillside and Jesus speaking to them, it occurred to me that maybe some had prepared and brought those loaves planning to eat them themselves. Whether it was someone in the crowd or the disciples, they were willing to give their loaves to Jesus when he asked for them. Jesus then took them, gave thanks, broke them and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people along with some fish. Jesus took what they gave him and performed the miracle. At the wedding in Cana he did not just make the empty jars suddenly full of wine, but asked the servants to fill the jars with water and then turned it into wine. Jesus takes what we have to offer and performs miracles. What do you have to offer Jesus that he could use to perform a miracle?

There are miracles all around us if we open our hearts, minds and eyes to see them. Some people refer to them as luck or a coincidence, I prefer to call them miracles. How many times has someone said to you the perfect thing, just what you needed to hear? Perhaps you opened the Bible, or a book and saw the words, or saw them on a billboard or heard it on the radio. These small miracles often help us to live with our daily problems.

The other thing this passage brought to mind was the compassion Jesus showed in wanting to feed the people who had been with him for three days. He knew they were hungry and he cared. The disciples couldn't figure out a way to feed them. Sometimes when we look at what is going on in the world, the people who are hurting, hungry, thirsty and without shelter and the enormity of it all we may say, "What can I do, I'm so far away, or I don't have a lot myself, or I'm only one person what difference can I make?" The answer is you can make a difference! You can bring cans of food for NEED, you can cook a meal for someone who is ill, you can call on people in the hospital or nursing homes. For world disasters you can give money to the Red Cross or others who will go and take care of the people for you. And, if you can't do anything else, you can pray. In fact, you can and should pray anyway in addition to whatever else you are able to do.

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN. BCP: p.826

Polly Post
Retired

Psalm 94, 95, 97, 99, 100; Genesis 49:29-50:14; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Mark 8:1-10



ONE SPIRIT, MANY GIFTS, ONE PURPOSE

*"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
1 Corinthians 12:7.*

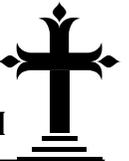
Paul is writing to a divided and confused church in Corinth (substitute any city, really), to which he corrects and teaches them. First and foremost the Lordship of Jesus Christ is proclaimed by the Spirit of God, and anything said otherwise is not from God. Second, there can be no doubt that there exists a variety of gifts, but all come from the same, one Spirit. This one Spirit gives many kinds of gifts; however, they are all for one expressed purpose, to glorify God and built up the body of Christ.

This is still true today, as we can see how different people are blessed with different gifts. Some have gifts of teaching, others of public speaking, while others have a gift for prayer, working with youth, or administrative gifts. A lesson to be learned here is that the one Holy Spirit gives many spiritual gifts for one ultimate purpose. Have you found your spiritual gift yet? If so, how are you using it to glorify God and built up the body of Christ?

Almighty God, whose loving hand hath given us all that we possess: use us and the gifts thou hast given us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Mark Polley
Seminary Student

Psalms 101, 109:1-30, 119:121-144; Genesis 50:15-26; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11;
Mark 8:11-26



PRESUMING WE KNOW WHAT'S BEST

"Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But ...he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Mark 8: 31-33

Even though his intentions were based in love, Peter presumed to tell the Lord of the Universe how he thought things should be. The Lord's response to Peter was swift and harsh, likely born out of frustration.

Every time a good friend of mine gets in the passenger seat of my car, she immediately changes my radio station, opens or closes my sunroof, adjusts the air conditioning, and so on. The other day she actually reached over and raised my sun visor because she didn't think I needed it anymore. As I started to get irritated with her, it dawned on me how often I do the same thing to God. I truly seek to do His will, yet daily I mindlessly start flipping the switches of my life assuming that I know what's best, and forgetting to ask and wait for God's direction. How much easier and more peaceful might my life be if I simply waited for God's guidance before rushing ahead with my own agenda. Thank goodness our God is one of infinite love and patience.

Holy Father, help us to set our minds on things divine and not human. Forgive us when we presume to know what's best, and give us a quiet spirit that seeks to hear your voice. AMEN.

Jacque Ridgway
Paralegal

Psalms 69:1-38, 73; Exodus 1:6-22; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Mark 8:27-9:1



The Feast of St. Joseph, foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Why did Joseph wind up in Egypt? Because of a dream. He wound up there because his brethren, Judah especially, wanted to get rid of him. Why? Because they were sick of his talking about his dreams in which they wound up bowing down before him. So they sold him into slavery for twenty pieces of silver.

Why then did Joseph wind up in Egypt? Because of a dream, in which he was warned by an angel to flee to Egypt. So he wound up there because the king wanted to get rid of him and his Son (according to the law), especially the Son. Although that king, Herod, was thwarted, ultimately Joseph's Son was betrayed to the authorities by Judah for thirty pieces of silver.

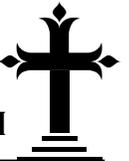
Those are the reasons according to the flesh that Joseph wound up in Egypt. But what about the real reason, the reason according to the Spirit? Joseph's words to his brethren, when they came to bow down before him in Egypt, says it all, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. . .ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good. . .to save much people alive." That reason applies to both Joseph son of Jacob/Israel in Genesis, and Joseph son of Jacob in St. Matthew's Gospel.

Why did Joseph wind up in Egypt? "To save much people alive!" And whenever I am tempted to say to myself, "What are you doing in Egypt, O my soul?" Now I know what to answer.

Let us pray. O God, who from the family of thy servant David didst raise up Joseph to be the guardian of thy incarnate Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and his obedience to thy commands; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN.

Fr. Richard Cantrell
Priest, St. Vincent's

Psalms 89:1-29, 2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16; Romans 4:13-18; Luke 2:41-52



Crying Out For Help

Mark 9: 22b-23 RSV "If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" Mark 9: 22b-23 RSV

This passage always resonates with me whenever I find myself, like the distraught father, crying out to God for help. I am always struck by the similarity of the reply Jesus gives him here with his assurance to the apostles in Matthew 19:26b that salvation is attainable, because "With God all things are possible." It reminds me that God is our very certain help in times of trouble, who has the power to intervene in miraculous ways. God also wants us to turn to Him and to let Him be our God. This is part of our intimate and personal relationship with Jesus that shows that we have made him the Lord of our lives. We should bring our joys and sorrows to God and share our triumphs, failures, and frustrations with Him in prayer. We should also have that portion of belief that prays, "Thy will be done" when we cannot see the sense in tragic events and meaningless suffering in our own lives and the lives of others. It is in those situations that we, too, pray, "I believe; help my unbelief."

In this passage, Jesus answers the distress call by healing the boy through one of the miracles that show us that Jesus really is God. Jesus really does counter the unbelief and heals the son. He gives us the hope that our prayerful belief can be helped and strengthened to the point that we can move mountains.

Almighty God, whose son assured us that all things are possible to us who believe, strengthen our belief and give us thy aid, that we may withstand our trials and glorify thy power by the strength of our faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Robert Boyer
Librarian

Psalms 33, 107:33-43, 108:1-13; Exodus 2:23-3:15; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13;
Mark 9:14-29



The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome, telling them that he intended to stop there on his way to preach the gospel in Spain. His focus in this letter is the redemption that is offered through Christ. As he nears the end, he begins to talk about some ethical issues, beginning in chapter 12.

First, in verse 1 he says "I appeal to you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifices..." Everyone knows that a sacrifice dies on the altar, but this is a different kind of thing. Here, the dying is dying to ourselves and living for Christ, day after day. Just as a sacrifice is consecrated to God, our lives are consecrated to God.

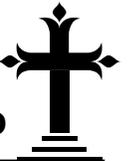
In verse 2, he tells them (and us) that we must not be conformed to this world. As Christians, we should not think, act, and appear just like everyone else. We should not conform to the world around us. After all, we are consecrated living sacrifices to God. In the following verses, Paul tells us how we *should* think and act; Don't think too highly of yourself, use your spiritual gifts in harmony with others, love genuinely, be zealous in your faith, be patient in tribulation, and the list goes on. Some of these things are easy, and some, well, not so much. For some, it is easy to be zealous in their faith, but not so easy to live in harmony with others. For others, it is easy to live in harmony with others, but hard to be constant in prayer.

So how do we do it when it is not easy? Verse 2 tells us. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Let God 'change your mind.' Each day, especially during this Lenten season, we put our whole self on the altar and let God be in charge. Through prayer and reading the Scriptures and Holy Communion, we allow Him to change us so that we may be that holy and acceptable living sacrifice.

Father in Heaven, thank you for the redemption that we have through Jesus. Give us the strength and courage to give our minds and bodies over to you fully, that you may transform and renew us each day, so that we may worship you and show what is good and acceptable and perfect to a world that needs you. AMEN.

Laura West
Sunday School Coordinator & Stay at Home Mom

Psalm 118; Exodus 3:16-4:12; Romans 12:1-21; John 8:46-59



GOD ALWAYS PROVIDES HELP

"But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." Exodus 4:13

I feel a kindred spirit with Moses. Often I have found myself in a position or situation in which I think I am ill-equipped or unprepared to successfully complete. I ask myself why God has chosen me to do some particular task – would not someone else be a better choice?

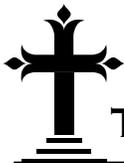
God may select you for a certain assignment, but He will never make you complete the work without help from others. So it was with Moses. Moses complained to God that he was not able to speak to the Pharaoh, and God told him that Aaron would speak for him. Moses also received help from his wife, Zipporah.

No matter how difficult the task, whether going up against the ruler of Egypt or taking on new responsibilities, God will provide you with the help you need.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for always tending to our needs. Grant us the understanding that no matter how difficult the task may be, you will always provide us with the help we need. AMEN.

Ken Monk,
Teacher/Administrator
St. Vincent's Cathedral School

Psalms 31, 35; Exodus 4:10-31; 1 Corinthians 14:1-19; Mark 9:30-41



Things Left Undone

"And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell." Mark 9:42-46

The obvious Lenten themes of purification come to mind from this passage. What causes me to sin? Generally I go back to the 10 Commandments. Or what about gluttony or other sins which maybe didn't make the top 10?

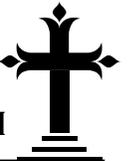
This past week I flew to North Carolina to attend the funeral for a 62 year old cousin, Linda. The death was sudden and unexpected. I was truly grateful that I visited with her over Christmas. We tried to connect several times over Christmas and finally on the day I was leaving I got to visit with her for a while. Our conversation was not profound or earthshaking or really memorable, but I am glad I went!

The general confession asks for forgiveness for "things done and left undone." Instead of thinking of sin as things I do, what about those things I left undone? What are the things that keep me from doing the things that are truly important. Why did I chose not to visit the person in the hospital, or why was I too busy to send the birthday card? Aren't these the really important things in life? What keeps me from doing these things? Maybe if I did more of these things, I would have less time or desire to do the other things?

Father in Heaven, help me to put first things first and not let the activities of the day push these things out Help me to live a "big rock" life where I always put the big rocks in the jar first. In Jesus name I pray. AMEN.

Tom Parham, Jr.
Engineer

Psalms 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127; Exodus 5:1-6:1;
1 Corinthians 14:20-33a, 39-40; Mark 9:42-50



Family

"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Mark 10:14-15

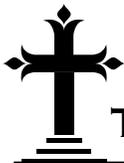
Being part of a family is God's plan for us. There are many varieties of earthly families. God gave me my husband and children to cherish and nurture. He allowed me to experience challenges along the way, as any good father would do, to help me grow in strength and courage, always drawing closer to Him, learning to depend on Him.

No matter who makes up our earthly family, God is our heavenly father. We can always turn to him. We are his children — his little children — no matter how old we are. Sometimes we let our hearts be hardened and our pride gets in the way, but it is us that he waits to hear from and it is us that he wants take into his arms to heal and bless.

*Lord, I praise your name. You are my heavenly father and savior. Thank you for your love, patience, and guidance. Keep my heart and mind open to your will. When I stray from you, pull me to you as you did those little children in Judea so that I might be worthy to receive your kingdom.
In your son's name I pray, AMEN.*

Barbara Hautanen
Teacher

Psalms 119:145-176; 128, 129, 130; Exodus 7:8-24; 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6;
Mark 10: 1-16.



The Annunciation of our Lord Jesus Christ
to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mary was only 16 years old when the angel appeared to her. How frightened she must have been. But the angel calmed her, telling her she was favored by our Lord. The angel did not call her name, instead he called her full of grace or filled with grace. Mary went on to question, "How can this be, I'm a virgin?" The angel went on to explain the Holy Spirit would fall upon her. Mary with her faith, her love for her Lord questioned no more, said "be it done unto me according to thy word."

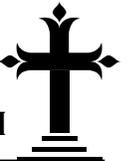
Thus Mary is the real living manifestation of that grace that comes first in the relation between God and his children. Mary was truly full of grace.

Mary can be a great intercessor for us. After all who was closest to our precious Jesus than his mother? I took Mary as my Mother at the age of six when I lost my Mother. In her gentle way she has lead me closer to Our Lord. She is after all our Heavenly Mother, the second Eve.

Mary, share with us your faith and strength so that we too can become vessels of God's love.

Margaret Jackson
Retired from L.D. Bell, 1990.
Church member since 1958.

Psalms 40:5-11, 45; Isaiah 7:10-14; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38



God's Grace Will Indeed Change Us

"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins." Mark 2:22

Have you ever felt like you were being stretched to the limit? So many things going on at once, or so many things going wrong at once, that you could hardly see your way out? Jesus' parable of the wineskins in chapter 2 of the Gospel According to St. Mark sheds some light on how God uses such difficult times to change us for His purpose.

Usually sealed goat skins were used to hold wine when it came out of the winepress. The key point is that when the wine was put into the skin, the fermenting process was not completed. For several more months fermentation would continue until the wine was ready. However, gasses released during this time had no place to go, and so the skin would stretch and inflate. But only a new skin could stand the pressure, because old skins that had already been stretched would not be able to handle further stress—they would simply rupture.

This Lenten season, are you ready to be made new, and receive a fresh draught of His transforming grace? Are you ready for that grace to continue its work in you like fermenting wine, stretching you and challenging comfortable reluctance to make your heart a fit dwelling place for the lover of your soul, who is also King of the universe? The wineskin must stay new, lest it burst. Behold Jesus makes all things new. May He keep us humble and open to His divine leading.

"Create in me a clean heart O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit." AMEN.

Brooks Higginbotham
Flight Instructor

Psalm 40, 51, 54, 95; Genesis 40:1-23; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23;
Mark 2:13-22



DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Ninth Plague: the Darkness

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky that over the land of Egypt there may be such intense darkness that one can feel it". So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was dense darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. Men could not see one another, nor could they move from where they were, for three days. Exodus 10:21-23

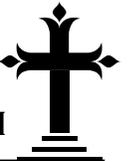
I have spent very cloudy nights in the desert and the mountains where there was immense openness, but a total absence of light, such that you could not see to move and had a feeling of helplessness or of being in absolute isolation and not being able to rely on yourself to act. But then, the sky would change or the night would end and there would be enough light to act as needed.

During my life, I have also had times that were dark or with a sense of despair, and acted without having proper light, trying to act solely on my own, and suffering or causing injury as a result. We need to remember and recall Ps. 43: 3, Send forth your light and your fidelity; they shall lead me on and bring me to your holy mountain and to your dwelling-place.

Dear God, thank you for sending your Son to light our way and our actions, so that all that we do may be directed to you. AMEN

Thom Murrell
Consultant

Psalms 42, 43, 137:1-9, 144; Exodus 10:21-11: 8; 2 Corinthians 4:13-18; Mark 10:46-52



THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes." Luke 19:41-42

Palm Sunday commemorates the approach of Jesus to Jerusalem, when crowds thronged his way, singing hosannas and waving branches at the triumphant entry of the one they acclaim as king. Yet a few days later another crowd will cry out for his execution. In this passage from the gospel, Jesus weeps over the city, seeing clearly not only how quickly they will turn, but also the destruction of the city in the coming years, because they did not recognize the true nature of his kingship when he visited them.

How often are we in Christ's church caught up in one enthusiasm or another, and how often do we fail to see the true working of God's Holy Spirit in our fellow Christians? We let transitory stresses and anxieties blind us to the presence of the peace that comes from God.

Heavenly Father, Lead us to rejoice as members of your kingdom here on earth, and keep us steadfast so that we may share in your triumphant kingdom in the life to come. Help us to make your house a house of prayer, and to hang on the words of the Lord Jesus, that we may know that he dwells in our hearts AMEN.

Charles M. Gatlin, Jr.
Technical editor

Psalm 24, 29, 103; Zechariah 9:9-12, 12:9-11, 13:1, 7-9; 1 Timothy 6:12-16;
Luke 19:41-48



God's Promises to Those with Broken and Contrite Hearts

"Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore me to the joy of your salvation . . . Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you." Psalm 51:10-13

As believers, God offers us true forgiveness when we go to Him and acknowledge our sins with a contrite heart. When penitence is accompanied by a broken spirit and a sincerely contrite heart, God forgives us with abundant mercy. But God's forgiveness goes beyond our understanding of forgiveness. God actually "blots-out" our sins from the record book (Psalm 51:1,9).

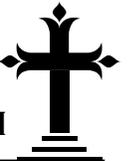
God then moves to the task of restoring us into relationship with Him. He does this by creating within us clean hearts and renewing a right spirit within us (Psalm 51:10). He calls us into his presence, that we might have the hope of experiencing his joy as we are delivered from our sins (Psalm 51:11-12).

But we aren't called to just stop with our own reconciliation with God. We are called to then take our redeemed lives and to share our testimonies with others. Our hope being that through our testimony of God's mercy and forgiveness towards us, others will be drawn into a personal relationship with God (Psalm 51:13).

Heavenly Father, forgive me the sins that separate me from you. In your mercy, create within me a clean heart and right spirit. And in your perfect timing, grant me the courage and opportunity to tell others of your forgiveness and mercy. AMEN.

Keal Cleveland
Real Estate Broker

Psalms 51:1-20, 69:1-23; Lamentations 1:1-2, 6-12; 2 Corinthians 1:1-7;
Mark 11:12-25



The Jewish Authorities challenged Jesus' credentials. "The chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him [Jesus] and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things?"

Jesus is in the area of the temple where teachers and their disciples/students gathered. A few verses earlier we have read that the chief priests and scribes are looking for a way to destroy Jesus, whose teaching is calling forth so powerful a response. Her Jesus exposes their attempt to discredit him; they, not Jesus, look foolish and "lacking authority."

Jesus' wisdom, authority and power in our lives are proven to us as we seek His will and ask for His guidance, in large matters and small. As His present-day disciples and followers, we need to stay ready to listen and learn, and ask for His help in every part of our day.

Lord Jesus, I accept your authority over my life. Keep me open to your guidance, looking to you for this day's direction in all my affairs, trusting your loving care to equip me in every situation.

Barbara Burns

Psalms 6, 12, 94; Lamentations 1:17-22; 2 Corinthians 1:8-22;
Mark 11:27-33



Stand firm in the faith and forgive

*"We are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith."
2 Corinthians 1:24b*

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he celebrates that the Christians in Corinth have stood firm in the faith. Paul teaches on the power of forgiveness and instructs that if a fellow Christian has caused pain, and shows remorse, we are to forgive. Paul will also forgive those we forgive in the presence of Christ.

Forgiveness is essential "so that we may not be outwitted by Satan."

As we live in our homes, jobs and community, we have to balance our faith with the challenges and struggles in the "real" world. How many times do you need to explain homework and bedtime procedures? Who's got the time to help others? It would be easier and faster to not step out for others in need. We would prefer to lash out at someone who has hurt our feelings or undercut us at the office. We are being tested.

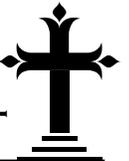
As members of the body of Christ, it is easy to hold grudges against others who have decided that we are wrong. It could be easy to feel superior to those "misguided" souls.

This is where we have to remember that Satan is eagerly waiting for dissention within the Christian family, locally and globally. We are to stand firm in our faith, and also to be willing to forgive and to ask for forgiveness.

Dear God, as we strive to stand firm in the faith, please help us to be willing to follow your guidance, ask for and give forgiveness, and to make Jesus Christ known in all that we do. AMEN.

Susan Frey
Secretary

Psalms 55, 74; Lamentations 2:1-9; 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11;
Mark 12:1-11



Maundy Thursday

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. John 13:1-15

This is one of the holiest nights of the church year. And it is so full of dichotomy. The good and the bad. The beautiful and the ugly. The love and the betrayal. The master and the servant.

Jesus girds himself with a towel and washes the disciples feet and tells us that he has give unto us an example. An example of obedience, of humility, of love. Love one another as I have loved you. Wash one another's feet.

I think we, as Anglican Christians, show forth this simple lesson from our Lord in what we do this night. We celebrate. We mark the institution of the Eucharist. I remember growing up and on this night all the images in the church would be draped in white as a symbol of the joy and celebration of this night. The GREAT GIFT of the Eucharist being instituted. And then we leave with the Blessed Sacrament and we remove everything from the sanctuary. We strip the altar. Our gladness has turned to sadness.

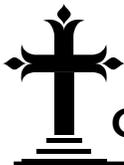
Yes, it is a day of contrasts, celebration, sadness, joy, and pain. But through it all the message is simple. Love one another as Jesus has loved us and wash one another's feet.

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood : Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN

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Kerwin Wade
Deacon

Psalms 102, 142, 143; Lamentations 2:10-18; 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32; Mark 14:12-25



GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 2ND

Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?

It is remarkable how often the hymn which I have chosen as my title is now sung in churches on Good Friday. It is also remarkable that the tune is an American tune generally unfamiliar to many Anglicans throughout the world. That is not necessarily bad: it merely indicates that local customs can, in fact, become not only a part of what we do liturgically, but also can become "traditional" if we do it more than a few times.

There is no essential problem with the hymn, and I would suggest that you turn to page 172 in the 1982 Hymnal for a meditation today. There is, however, one unintentional problem in the hymn, and it is simply two words – "you" and "they." The dilemma is that when we do something positive or participate even in a minimal way in a positive endeavor, we use the words "I" or "we." When we do something that is negative, we shift to the "they" mode. For example when a child receives an "A" for a grade the student says, "I got an 'A'." When a student receives an "F," he or she says, "Teacher gave me an 'F'."

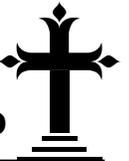
The point is this: we say that Jesus died on the Cross for our sins. He died on the Cross for my sins. We are the beneficiaries of the Savior's act that was for all intents and purposes an injustice and a mockery of appropriate jurisprudence. On the other hand it is our sin, it is my sin, that put Him on the Cross. If we, as a people, are to appropriate the implications of His salvific oblation, then we must also, as a people, take responsibility for the sin that put Him on the Cross.

While I have never been accused of revising texts to suit my needs, nonetheless, I wonder what it would be like if we removed from each verse of this hymn, the word "they" and replaced it with "we" and "I." When Jesus needed His people was I there? When He was thirsty was I there? Of course, we can build a good case for ourselves by saying that we were not even born yet. If that be the case then why do we, as a people, claim salvation through his death upon the Cross, but not accept our responsibility, as a people, for putting Him there? Jesus does not let us "off the hook." When He told His Apostles that they had failed to meet His needs, and they protested by saying that they were unaware of the fact that they had failed to feed Him and clothe them, He said, "As you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." Was I there when I crucified my Lord?

Almighty and Everlasting God, I am sorry that when Your Son needed me the most I was self absorbed. I am sorry when He placed a need before me in the person of a broken person, that I had excuses that caused me not to respond. Lord Jesus, I am sorry for the many lost opportunities when I could have clothed you, fed you, and comforted you. I pray that just as You have given me another chance through the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, that you will give me more chances to serve You, as I see Your Face, Your Wounds, and Your Vulnerability, through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. AMEN.

The Right Reverend Keith L. Ackerman, SSC, DD
VIII Bishop, Diocese of Quincy; Assisting Bishop, Diocese of Bolivia;
President, Forward in Faith, N.A.

Psalms 22, 40:1-19, 54, 95; Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-33; 1 Peter 1:10-20;
John 13:36-38, 19:38-42



Holy Saturday

"My friend and my neighbor you have put away from me, and darkness is my only companion" Psalm 88:19

Imagine what the disciples felt. The past week had been everything from the highest of highs with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the lowest of lows with his torture and death. Now they hide. They are lost. Their friend and leader, Jesus, lay dead and in the grave. It is over. They are sad and weeping. They are confused and doubtful. How could they have been so wrong? Not only had they lost a dear friend, but Jesus was their leader. Peter said Jesus was God. They fear for themselves. What are the Jewish leaders going to do with them? What happens to their lives now? They lost their faith.

Isn't that easy to do? You have your plans all laid out. You had made sacrifices to achieve them. You have great expectations. Then something happens. What you have hoped for and worked so hard for falls apart. It doesn't happen. You react. You are angry, sad, confused. Were you wrong? Was all that you had done for naught? You lose your faith. You don't believe. You are broken. A darkness settles about you. This is where the disciples are. At this point they do not know the whole story. Jesus is not gone.

This is where you are. Only you know the whole story. Now your awareness of God comes back to you. You thought you were all alone, but God has never really left you. You just were momentarily in darkness. The ups and downs of life have come, but the everlasting love of God enfolds you. Whatever happens in this life you know that God does not forsake you. God loves you.

Almighty God and Father, help us in our times of darkness to remember to turn back to you and know the love that you send us through your son Jesus the Christ. Help us keep our hearts and minds open to the Holy Spirit, so we may know you as the one, true, and loving God. AMEN.

Lenore Rothman
Physician Assistant

Psalms 27, 88, 95; Lamentations 3:37-58; Hebrews 4:1-16;
Romans 8:1-11



EASTER DAY

Jesus came and stood among them and said to them "Peace be with you." John 20:19b

Reflecting on the empty tomb on Easter Sunday, the words of the great hymn come to my mind:

*"The strife is o'er, the battle done, the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun, alleluia."*

When Jesus rose from the tomb and came and stood among the disciples, his greeting to them was "peace be with you." With the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, true peace is now available. Living in sin, we are at war with ourselves, we are at war with one another, and we are at war with God. But the atoning work of Jesus on the cross and in His Resurrection offers us something that we cannot know apart from Jesus: true peace. It is a peace that passes all understanding.

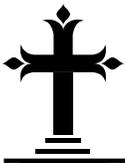
The peace that Jesus offers comes with joy, and wholeness, and life. Because of the empty tomb; because Jesus lives, we too can now live. We can live in peace with ourselves, we can live in peace with one another, and, most importantly, we can be at peace with God.

Alleluia Christ is Risen. The Lord is Risen indeed. Alleluia.

The Very Reverend Ryan Reed
Dean of St. Vincent's Cathedral

Psalms 113, 114, 118, 148, 149, 150; Exodus 12:1-14; Isaiah 51:9-11;
John 1:1-18; Luke 24:13-35; John 20:19-23





2010 LENTEN SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Our regular schedule of daily services is offered throughout Lent in addition to Stations of the Cross. The Nursery is available.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Friday, February 19th 6:00 p.m. | Stations of the Cross | |
| Friday, February 26th 6:00 p.m. | <i>First Station: Jesus is condemned to death</i> followed Lenten Meal | Rt. Rev. Ray Sutton (REC) |
| Friday, March 5th 6:00 p.m. | <i>Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus</i> followed by Lenten Meal | Rt. Rev. Keith Ackerman (Forward in Faith) |
| Friday, March 12th 6:00 p.m. | <i>Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene</i> <i>carries the cross of Jesus</i> followed by Lenten Meal | Rt. Rev. Jack Iker (Diocese of Fort Worth) |
| Friday, March 19th 6:00 p.m. | <i>Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross</i> followed by Lenten Meal | Rt. Rev. William Wantland (Diocese of Fort Worth) |
| Friday, March 26th 6:00 p.m. | <i>Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb</i> followed by Lenten Meal | Rt. Rev. Frederick Fick (Forward in Faith) |

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

The Nursery is available for all services during Holy Week.

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|---|-------------------------------|
| Monday, March 29th 7:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist |
| Tuesday, March 30th 10:30 a.m. | Mass of Collegiality |
| Tuesday, March 30th 7:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist |
| Wednesday, March 31st 7:00 p.m. | Holy Eucharist |
| Thursday, April 1st 7:30 p.m. | Maundy Thursday Service |
| Friday, April 2nd 7:30 p.m. | Good Friday Liturgy |
| Saturday, April 3rd Sunset (approximately 8:00 p.m.) | Easter Vigil |
| Sunday, April 4th 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. | Easter Sunday- Holy Eucharist |

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