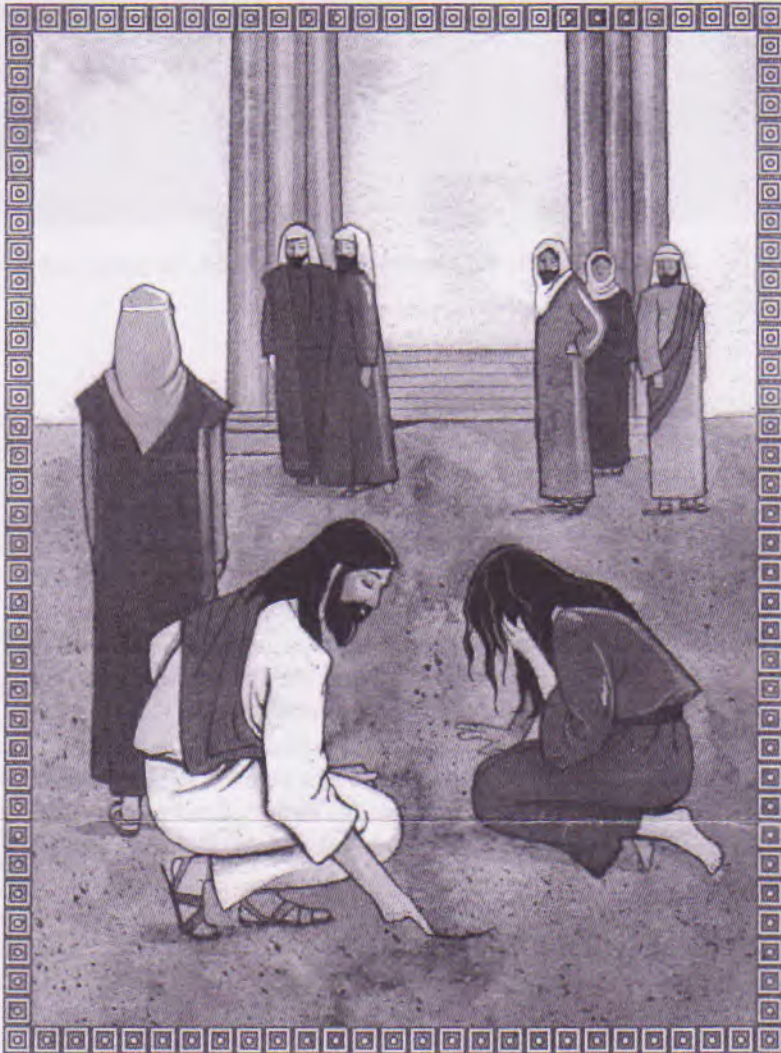


Fifth Sunday of Lent



Prayer for Courage and Compassion

Jesus, our brother,
source of all forgiveness,
you who saw far beyond surface
appearances,
and spoke kindly to a woman
surrounded by revenge-seekers.
Give us the courage to come to you too,
no matter what we've done,
counting on your welcome.
May we look with compassion
as you did,
not only on the woman, but on her
accusers.
Grant this, you who live and reign
with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday March 17, 2013
The Important Pause

Today's Readings: Isaiah 43:16–21; Psalm 126:1–2, 2–3, 4–5, 6 (3); Philippians 3:8–14; John 8:1–11. Some approach this story puzzled that somehow the woman was able to commit adultery *all by herself*: her partner is never mentioned. But once we've gotten past that imprint of the ancient patriarchal society, we can look deeper, into the story's overarching theme of forgiveness.

The forgiveness is not only for the woman. The scribes and Pharisees act despicably, reflecting their belief that a wife was property. They are just as angry as if a man's Lexus or oxen had been stolen. What kind of spying were they doing to catch her "in the very act"? And how pretentious they are to make "her stand before all of them," as they probably drooled with unconcealed venom. And yet, Jesus forgives them too, after an important pause.

We can learn from that pause. While one theory holds that he wrote their sins on the ground, another says he was simply buying time for everyone to consider, time for his words to do their work. Sometimes when we're tempted to rush to judgment or speak impulsively, we can pause as he did. The wisest words are often, "I need to think about that. Can I get back to you tomorrow?" Then we have time to cool off, think, clarify important values, or let anger erode and wisdom rise.

We can let this story touch us. We can see ourselves in it, knowing that whatever we've done, Jesus says to us personally, "Neither do I condemn you." Can we really believe in the vastness of his forgiveness and find a warm nest and a fresh start there?



This Week at Home

Monday, March 18

Testimony

In today's Gospel, when the Pharisees accuse him of testifying on his own behalf, rendering the testimony invalid, Jesus replies confidently: "my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going." Jesus moved through the world confidently because he always knew who he was. And have we not learned where we come from and where we are going? If we, too, belong to God, how secure should that make us? Today's Readings: Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (4ab); John 8:12-20.

Tuesday, March 19

Solemnity of Saint Joseph

Both options for today's Gospel remind us that sanctity doesn't mean gliding blissfully through life, three feet above the ground. Joseph wrestled with difficult problems. In the first case, he knew the law of his day: a pregnant, unmarried woman would be stoned to death. But he has courage and creativity to move beyond the law. In the second situation, he must have felt embarrassment and anger about Jesus staying behind in the Temple when his family left Jerusalem to journey home. Joseph might well be the patron saint of parents who struggle with teenagers! Today's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29 (37); Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a.

Wednesday, March 20

A Life-long Process

In today's Gospel, when Jesus invites listeners to "continue in my word," what does he mean? He may suggest that growing in faith is an ongoing process, never fully achieved. He also implies a "dwelling" in the word: not simply hearing it on Sunday, but pondering it, studying it, applying it to specific life situations. The first hearers backpedal to the safety of Abraham, not realizing the irony. *He* was willing to set forth into the unknown. Are we? Today's Readings: Daniel

3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56 (52b); John 8:31-42.

Thursday, March 21

Hot Soup

For a meatless meal tomorrow, try Panera Broccoli Cheese Soup: 1 tablespoon melted butter, ½ medium chopped onion, ¼ cup melted butter, ¼ cup flour, 2 cups half-and-half, 2 cups vegetable broth, ½ pound fresh broccoli, 1 cup chopped carrot, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg, 2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese, salt and pepper. Sauté onion in butter. Set aside. Cook melted butter and flour, using a whisk, over medium heat for 3-5 minutes. Stir constantly and add the half & half. Add the vegetable stock. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add the broccoli, carrots, and onions. Cook over low heat 20-25 minutes. Add salt and pepper. May be puréed in a blender. Return to heat; add cheese and nutmeg. Serves 4. Today's Readings: Genesis 17:3-9; Psalm 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (8a); John 8:51-59.

Friday, March 22

Where to Turn

The prophet Jeremiah was violently rejected for preaching God's Word. In today's first reading, when he hears whispers of terror and denunciation, he prays, "but the Lord is with me" (20:11). What do you do when you are beset by opposition or confronted with warnings of doom and gloom? Where do you turn for courage and reassurance? Today's Readings: Jeremiah 20:10-13; Psalm 18:2-3a, 3bc-4, 5-6, 7 (see 7); John 10:31-42.

Saturday, March 23

St. Turibius of Mogrovejo

Astonished to be sent on a mission to Peru when he simply wanted to teach law in Spain, St. Turibius might have repeated these grounding words of God, delivered through Ezekiel: "My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (37:27). If you're feeling insecure or wobbly, try praying them yourself and know that God is dwelling with you. Today's Readings: Ezekiel 37:21-28; Jeremiah 31:10, 11-12abcd, 13 (see 10d); John 11:45-56.



© 2012 Liturgy Training Publications. 1-800-933-1800. Written by Kathy Coffey. Illustrated by Jenny Reynish. Soup recipe is from www.food.com. Scripture quotations are from *The New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition*, copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Permission to publish granted by the Archdiocese of Chicago on September 5, 2012.

 Keeping the Seasons
Reproducibles for Lent-Triduum-Easter 2013