

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Prayer to Deepen Our Love for God

Compassionate Father,
even without our asking,
you have forgiven the sins of your children.
Reaching out to make a covenant with the
houses of Israel and Judah,
you wrote your law of love upon
their hearts.

Guide the members of your Church
to seek to discover your imprint
on our hearts,
and deepen our desire to love you from the
depths of our being,
acknowledging that you are our God
and we are your people.

During these last weeks of Lent,
help us to seek your will and serve and
follow you,
for you offer the way to eternal life.
We ask this through your Son, our Lord
Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, March 22, 2015

Written on Our hearts



Today's Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15 (12a); Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33. By the Fifth Sunday of Lent, we are longing for the alleluias of Easter. We continue on with our Lenten practices, though, knowing that the disciplines help to root our lives in Christ.

We receive a message of hope in today's First Reading when we hear the Lord tell Jeremiah that he will write his law in the hearts of his people. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," he says. In this phrase we see an intimate union born from the love of God. It is a love that Psalm 51 attests is filled with compassion and goodness.

Jesus' words in the Gospel point ahead to the Cross. We hear that Jesus is troubled and that he will be lifted up.

Though anguish fills his words, hope also is within them. Not only will God be glorified when the hour has come, but Jesus "will draw all people to myself." Just as the reading from Jeremiah speaks of union with God so does the Gospel. We find in this reading from John that the Father will honor those who serve and follow Jesus.

As Easter nears, we might consider whether we strive to live in accord with the Jesus portrayed in the Letter to the Hebrews. Jesus, St. Paul writes, prayed with reverence, learned obedience through suffering, and was made perfect. Do we seek to be made perfect? As the Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium* notes, all are "called to holiness" (39).



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mercy over Law

Again and again, the scribes and Pharisees tried to see if Jesus would go by the law that Moses established among the Israelites. In today's Gospel, these keepers of the law seek Jesus' opinion on stoning a woman caught in adultery. Jesus demonstrates God's love and mercy when he states that the one without sin should be the first to cast a stone. During this season of reconciliation, we might want to examine whether we are alienated from someone who needs our mercy. Today's Readings: Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (4ab); John 8:1-11.

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Speaking as God Desires

At the end of today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that he speaks as the Father has instructed him and that he always does what pleases the Father. Consider your discussions during the day. How have they reflected how God would want you to speak? Have you said anything unkind? Have you said anything in anger? Has there been anything that could hurt another's reputation? Have you spoken as God would desire? Today's Readings: Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 102:2-3, 16-18, 19-21 (2); John 8:21-30.

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

The Annunciation of the Lord

Mary has much to teach us from the moment that she tells the angel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your will." In the Apostolic Letter on the Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Pope John Paul II refers to "the school of Mary," noting how the Mother of the Church teaches through her "pilgrimage of faith." Do you look to Mary's discipleship as a model for how to follow Christ in your life? Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Psalm 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11 (8a and 9a); Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38.

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Let Us Not Harden Our Hearts

It is no surprise that, at the end of today's Gospel, the people picked up stones to throw at Jesus. After all, they thought that it was blasphemy when Jesus identified himself as I AM. As good Jews, they knew that at the burning bush, God called himself I AM. Upon hearing this from Jesus, they thought he should be stoned for his claim to be God. One might wonder if the people of Jesus' time had hardened their hearts and so did not believe. Can it be said that we have hardened our hearts to Jesus' words? Today's Readings: Genesis 17:3-9; Psalm 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 (8a); John 8:51-59.

Friday, March 27, 2015

Remaining with Jesus

Today's Gospel is very much like yesterday's. Again, people seek to stone Jesus for blasphemy and again he escapes them. This time Jesus returns to the place where John the Baptist first pointed him out, calling him the Lamb of God. The passage notes that Jesus "remained" in this spot. Many of the people who came to him believed. As we near the end of Lent, spend some time silently with Jesus, realizing that he is remaining with you, waiting for you to acknowledge his presence. Today's Readings: Jeremiah 20:10-13; Psalm 18:2-3, 3bc-4, 5-6, 7 (7); John 10:31-42.

Saturday, March 28, 2015

Awaiting the Hour

As the time of Jesus' Death draws near, he has retreated to a town near the desert. He has come to do the Father's will and does not want to be arrested before his hour has come. We might also imagine that Jesus is spending time in prayer to prepare for what he will face in his Passion and Death. How have you planned to spend Holy Week? Are you prepared to reserve the days to participate in the liturgy? It is our holiest of weeks. Today's Readings: Ezekiel 37:21-28; Jeremiah 31:10, 11-12abcd, 13 (10d); John 11:45-56.



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Keeping the Seasons

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