

Fifth Sunday of Lent Sunday, March 21, 2010

Scripture:

Remember not the events of the past,
the things of long ago consider not;
see, I am doing something new!
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
In the desert I make a way,
in the wasteland, rivers.
Wild beasts honor me,
jackals and ostriches,
for I put water in the desert
and rivers in the wasteland
for my chosen people to drink,
the people whom I formed for myself,
that they might announce my praise.

Isaiah 43: 19-21

Quote:

The Church continues to speak to all people and all nations, for it is only in the name of the Christ that salvation is given to men and women. Salvation . . . permeates this world in the realities of the economy and labor, of technology and communications, of society and politics, of the international community and the relations among cultures and peoples.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,
Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, # 1

Reflection:

Jesus Christ came to give us life; he wants us to be fully human and to know the abundance of grace in all the aspects of life in community with others. The salvation He offers is not separate from our life in this world. Our salvation depends on embracing the Spirit and playing our creative role in shaping the economic, social and cultural life of the global community.



Prayer:

We, your people, long for life, O Lord.
We long to know your promise
through the fullness of being.
We long for a life lived in awareness of the
sacredness of all aspects of your Creation.
Lord, help us to embrace
the Spirit you send into this world
and to make the Spirit visible in the world.

Fasting:

- Fast from wishful thinking and longing for the "good old days." Fully embrace the present moment and give it your undivided attention. Look for the goodness around you today.

Almsgiving:

Explore the website, "Pray as You Go" for daily prayer downloads for MP3 players. This site is a ministry of the Jesuits and provides daily prayer in MP3 format, for people travelling to and from work. Resources on the site combine music, Scripture, and questions for reflection.

Website:

Pray As You Go

Address:

<http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/>

Monday, March 22, 2010

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R. *Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.*

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff
that give me courage. Psalm 23:1-4

Quote:

Hope in the coming kingdom is already beginning to take root in the hearts of people. The radical transformation of the world in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord gives full meaning to the efforts of people, and in particular of the young, to lessen injustice, violence and hatred and to advance all together in justice, freedom, kinship and love.

World Synod of Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo* (1971), no. 76

Reflection:

Hope is the promise and the culmination of Lent. By choosing to give our attention to signs of hope, signs of the seeds of justice and peace in the world, we prepare ourselves to be an Easter people. With hope, we can take part in the just transformation of the world, knowing the Paschal Mystery will inspire our efforts as we move forward to build the Kingdom of God.



Prayer:

O Lord, we look to you
for the vision to see signs of hope
in this struggling global community.
We look to you for the strength
to practise hope in our hearts
and in the world.
We recall the wondrous deeds you have done;
grace us to perform the deeds of justice,
to prepare your people for peace.

Fasting:

- Fast from inattention to signs of hope in the world. Be intentional about looking for signs of hope all around you, in what you choose to see, in what you choose to read, in the people around you.

Almsgiving:

Learn about the seeds of hope being planted at a farm run by the Sisters of St. Dominic in Akron, Ohio. Their farm, Crown Point Ecology Center is becoming a nationally recognized model for combining spirituality, justice, land conservation and community learning.

Website:
Crown Point Ecology Center
Address:
<http://www.crownpt.org/>

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Scripture:

The nations shall revere your name, O LORD,
and all the kings of the earth your glory,
When the LORD has rebuilt Zion
and appeared in his glory;
When he has regarded the prayer of the destitute,
and not despised their prayer.
Let this be written for the generation to come,
and let his future creatures praise the LORD:
“The LORD looked down from his holy height,
from heaven he beheld the earth,
To hear the groaning of the prisoners,
to release those doomed to die.

Psalm 102: 16-21

Quote:

As the Gospel reverberating by means of the Church in the today of men and women, the Church’s social doctrine is a word that brings freedom... Evangelizing the social sector means infusing into the human heart the power of meaning and freedom found in the Gospel, in order to promote a society more human because it is in greater conformity with the Kingdom of God.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,
Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #63

Reflection:

Freedom is the gift we are given through the sacrifice of Christ, and freedom is the gift we are called to pass on, though the work of compassion and social justice. To be fully human is to internalize the liberation we are offered though the events of Holy Week and Easter, so we can be fully present to the problems in human society, without fear or despair, and so we can respond with discernment and hope, co-creating a society that is deeply human.



Prayer:

Lord of liberty,
we hunger for the freedom you call us to.
Do not despise our prayers;
release us from the prison
of our own interests, our own fears.
May the Gospel be echoed by our voices
and reverberate in our actions.
May we work in freedom
to build the Kingdom of God.

Fasting:

- Fast from enslavement to fear, from enslavement to despair and enslavement to a consumer society. Reflect on the freedom that comes through Jesus Christ and the call to actively contribute to a more humane world in conformity to the Kingdom vision.

Almsgiving:

Today, across the world, a new form of slavery is emerging globally in the form of trafficking in human persons. Learn about the issue, the Church’s commitment to put a stop to it, and the work of the Catholic Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

Website:

USCCB Migration & Refugee Services

Address:

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/trafficking/index.shtml>

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Scripture:

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

(Daniel 3:16-18)

Quote:

The persistence of poverty in a nation as wealthy as ours is a deep moral failing and a social crisis that weakens our nation. From a Judeo-Christian perspective, it means that the covenant has been ruptured. Our relationship with God is not in right order, and the injustice of poverty and extreme inequality cries out for change.

Catholic Charities USA, *Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good*, 2006

Reflection:

In contemporary Western culture we see all around us the idolatry of wealth and power, the idolatry of national security and national interests, the idolatry of the self. False gods are everywhere; they are the golden idols of this period in history. To return to a right relationship with our God, we need to recognize these false idols and to turn back to the Word. The Word of God will direct us to recognize that everyone has the right to a life of dignity and a decent life-style.



Prayer:

We long to serve you, Lord, and you alone.
Help us to hear our Church call us
to be in right relationship to you
and to your children.
Give us the wisdom and courage
to turn from false idols
so we may embrace the common good
and promote justice in our land.

Fasting:

- Fast today from desiring to be anybody but your true self. Be attentive to your deeper identity as God's beloved. Turn away from false images and turn toward the Truth found in the Scriptures and in the teachings of the Jesus Christ.

Almsgiving:

Learn about the Catholic Church's call to become communities of Salt and Light. Read about the vision for vibrant parish outreach and witness. Reflect on the challenges presented.

Website:

Communities of Salt and Light

Address:

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/saltandlight090416.shtml>



Thursday, March 25, 2010

Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord

Scripture:

Sacrifice or oblation you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
then said I, "Behold I come."
"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
To do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!"

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.
Your justice I kept not hid within my heart;
your faithfulness and your salvation I have spoken of;
I have made no secret of your kindness and your truth
in the vast assembly. Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

Psalm 40:7-11

Quote:

By means of her social doctrine, the Church takes on the task of proclaiming what the Lord has entrusted to her. She makes the message of the freedom and redemption wrought by Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, present in human history.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,
Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, # 63

Reflection:

The social doctrine of our Church is a rich gift to us, a gift that challenges us but also brings us joy, the delight spoken of in Psalm 40. In God's kindness, God gives us the beauty of the message of justice and human dignity, freedom and redemption. During these last weeks of Lent, prepare for the the reaffirmation of this message on Easter and during the Easter season. Keep minds and hearts open and attentive to God's word and to God's world.



Prayer:

Here we are, Lord,
ready to do your will,
to listen attentively
to the message of justice
and to take delight in your teachings.
Give us a taste of your joy
so we in turn can share the Good News.
May we help embody it
in our period of human history.

Fasting:

- Fast from being closed from the delight and joy of hearing and responding to the proclamation of justice for all. Remember that the point of Lent is the movement to the Light of Easter.

Almsgiving:

In honor of today's feast, learn about the work of Annunciation House on the U.S./Mexico border. Annunciation House is a Catholic organization that accompanies the migrant, homeless, and economically vulnerable peoples of the border region through hospitality, advocacy, and education.

Website:

Annunciation House

Address:

<http://annunciationhouse.org/baexperience/>

Friday, March 26, 2010

Scripture:

O LORD of hosts, you who test the just,
who probe mind and heart,
Let me witness the vengeance you take on them,
for to you I have entrusted my cause.
Sing to the LORD!
Give praise to the LORD!
He rescues the life of the needy
from the hands of the wicked.

Jeremiah 20:13

Quote:

Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love — *caritas* — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 1

Reflection:

What does it mean to be fully human? In the social teaching of the Church, part of that challenge is to be continually moving into a deeper understanding of the human community in its global scope, of its systems and structures, so we will have the knowledge and skills to help develop and support the potential of all members of the human family. By helping others become more fully who they were created to be, we develop our own human potential and become more fully who God created us to be.



Prayer:

Let us sing to the Lord and give praise
by the way we live and by what we choose
to learn about injustice in this world.
Let us sing to the Lord and give praise
by our response to those in need.
Let us sing to the Lord and give praise
by our commitment to develop our own
humanity as we contribute
to the development of all members
of the human family.

Fasting:

- Fast today from being critical or judgmental of others. Let go of negative thinking that tempts you to reject others or desire to “get even”. Free yourself to be more loving.

Almsgiving:

Take some time to explore the Fetzer Institute website with tools and resources on love and forgiveness. Listen to podcasts, develop better skills, reflect on what matters most. Learn how to let go of past hurts and forgive.

Website:

Campaign for Love and Forgiveness

Address:

<http://www.fetzer.org/loveandforgive>



Saturday, March 27, 2010

Scripture:

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, proclaim it on distant coasts, and say: He who scattered Israel, now gathers them together, he guards them as a shepherd his flock. The LORD shall ransom Jacob, he shall redeem him from the hand of his conqueror. Shouting, they shall mount the heights of Zion, they shall come streaming to the LORD'S blessings: The grain, the wine, and the oil, the sheep and the oxen; They themselves shall be like watered gardens, never again shall they languish. Then the virgins shall make merry and dance, and young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will console and gladden them after their sorrows.

Jeremiah 31: 10-13

Quote:

If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation. The quest for peace by people of good will surely would become easier if all acknowledged the indivisible relationship between God, human beings and the whole of creation. Christians contemplate the cosmos and its marvels in light of the creative work of the Father and the redemptive work of Christ, who by his death and resurrection has reconciled with God "all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Col 1:20).

Protecting the natural environment in order to build a world of peace is thus a duty incumbent upon each and all. It is an urgent challenge, one to be faced with renewed and concerted commitment; it is also a providential opportunity to hand down to coming generations the prospect of a better future for all.

Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace Message, 2010, #14

Reflection:

The quality of our lives depends on our capacity for gratitude, for joy, for beauty and truth, and for community. It is a constant challenge to emphasize being rather than having in our consumer society, for sharing rather than hoarding, and for putting people above profits. Responding to this challenge, failing in the response and beginning again--and seeking communities which will give us the support we need to live an economically moral manner--is an authentic part of our Lenten journey, especially as we move closer to the day when Life is raised above death.



Prayer:

Grace us, God of Life,
so we can know the joy of your abundance,
so we can experience our "being" in joyful
community with our sisters and brothers.

Guide us, God of Wisdom,
so we can make discerning choices about our
lifestyles and economic priorities.
Grant us the moral vision to see life both as
gift and as responsibility.

Fasting:

- Fast from being occupied with "having" and enjoy simply being" today. Appreciate the abundance you have and look for new ways to share that abundance with others. Know that sharing brings much more long-lasting joy than excessive consuming.

Almsgiving:

Living simply is easy to do and has global ramifications. The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change has links and resources for reflection and action. Learn about the many ways you can make a difference in an effort to live more simply and reduce your own carbon footprint.

Website:

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

Address:

<http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/resources/index.html>