

## Second Sunday of Lent: Feb. 28, 2010

### Scripture:

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Luke 9:28-36

### Quote:

The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labors are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the hearts of human persons. For in human persons many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as creatures, human persons experience their limitations in a multitude of ways; on the other hand they feel themselves to be boundless in their desires and summoned to a higher life. Pulled by manifold attractions human persons are constantly forced to choose among them and renounce some.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, #10

### Reflection:

Today we read how an occasion of prayerful retreat became an encounter of God's glory for the Apostles. Isn't it our own hope that when we take time out for prayer we will encounter God? Our hope is that in seeking God, we will see God's glory revealed even through our needs and limitations. We often resist taking time away because of the pull of many competing demands. But we are reminded today of the call to stop, to encounter, to pray. Only by stepping out of our routines can we allow God to transfigure our awareness. And like Peter and his companions, we must listen to Jesus and bring our mountain top experiences back into the plains of our daily life.



### Prayer:

Help us make times of retreat a priority among the competing demands for our time. Awaken our desire to recognize You in the ordinary circumstances of our lives. As we resist the urge to build tents of complacency, renew in us your vision of justice, so we may journey forward glorifying You with our lives.

### Fasting:

- Today, fast from over-scheduling and frenzied activity. Set priority time aside to be still and seek God's presence in solitude. Book a retreat or make one on-line. See below.

### Almsgiving:

- Discover an on-line retreat designed for busy people, done in the midst of our everyday lives. Numerous resources can be found on the Creighton University site. Let these resources lead you to the mountain.

#### Website:

Creighton University Online Ministries

#### Address:

[www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html](http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html)

## Monday, March 1, 2010

### Scripture:

Lord, great and awesome God,  
you who keep your merciful covenant  
toward those who love you  
and observe your commandments!  
We have sinned, been wicked and done evil;  
we have rebelled and departed from your  
commandments and your laws.  
We have not obeyed your servants the prophets,  
who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes,  
our fathers, and all the people of the land.  
Justice, O Lord, is on your side;  
we are shamefaced even to this day.

Daniel 9:7-9

### Quote:

God's passionate love for his people—for humanity—is at the same time a forgiving love. It is so great that it turns God against himself, his love against his justice. Here Christians can see a dim prefiguration of the mystery of the Cross: so great is God's love for man that by becoming man he follows him even into death, and so reconciles justice and love.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, #10

### Reflection:

Today's readings draw into focus the rich theme of mercy. In the first reading and the gospel, mercy is an action of God offered freely and graciously to us, over and over again. In the gospel, Jesus instructs us to stop judging and be merciful to others as God is merciful to us. The mercy and love of God are beyond our human capacity to truly fathom. Graham Greene said it this way, "You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone, the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God." How have we been "rebellious" against God by withholding the 'appalling strangeness' of mercy to others? Where must we face our shame and extend mercy



### Prayer:

God of Infinite Mercy, as we confront our own failure to be merciful, forgive us once more. Help us to forgive others as we have been forgiven. Replace our tendencies to measure and judge others with acceptance and generosity. May we be your mirrors of justice today.

### Fasting:

- Today, fast from miserly measuring and stinginess. Catch someone off-guard with an act of outrageous, unmerited generosity. Reflect on the impact.

### Almsgiving:

- Learn about the work of Jesuit Refugee Service, and what they are doing globally to serve and defend the rights of vulnerable and often forgotten people.

Web site:

Jesuit Refugee Service

Address:

<http://jrsusa.org/>

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

**Scripture:**

Stop doing wrong,  
learn to do right!  
Seek justice,  
encourage the oppressed.  
Defend the cause of the orphan,  
plead the case of the widow.

Is. 1:16-17

**Quote:**

Mindful of the words of the Lord: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn. 13:35), Christians can yearn for, nothing more ardently than to serve the people of this age successfully with increasing generosity. Holding loyally to the Gospel, enriched by its resources, and joining forces with all who love and practice justice, they have shouldered a weighty task here on earth and they must render an account of it to him who will judge all people on the last day.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, #93

**Reflection:**

Our role as human beings is to cooperate in the creative work and action of God. As we live out this essential vocation we need to assess the impacts of our actions or inactions in order to ensure “right-action” and righteousness. The measure of effectiveness lies in assessing how the poorest and most vulnerable are faring. The fruitfulness of faith can only be found only there.

**Prayer:**

God of Perseverance, at times we are overwhelmed by the work that has yet to be done. Encourage us with signs of hope so that we may sustain our work for the long haul. We seek Your mercy and trust in Your providence. Help us use the tools before us, prayer, education, and advocacy to increase the harvest of justice.

**Fasting:**

- Today, fast from doubt. Resist the temptation to question the level of your faith or the extent of your effectiveness. Trust in the slow but fruitful work of God.

**Almsgiving:**

- Learn about the state of the situation in Haiti and learn how you can participate in the rebuilding effort to restore human dignity and foster greater solidarity.

Web site:

Catholic Relief Services - Haiti

Address:

<http://crs.org/haiti/slideshow/>



Wednesday, March 3, 2010

**Scripture:**

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20: 25-28

**Quote:**

Egoism and domination are permanent temptations for human beings. Likewise an ever finer discernment is needed, in order to strike at the roots of newly arising situations of injustice and to establish progressively a justice which will be less and less imperfect. In industrial change, which demands speedy and constant adaptation, those who will find themselves injured will be more numerous and at a greater disadvantage from the point of view of making their voices heard. The Church directs her attention to those new “poor”—the handicapped and the maladjusted, the old, different groups of those on the fringe of society, and so on—in order to recognize them, help them; defend their place and dignity in a society hardened by competition and the attraction of success.

Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, #15

**Reflection:**

In today’s gospel, Jesus shines a light on the misuse of authority. He is critiquing the unjust exercise of power and calling for structures of inversion. In other words, Jesus is turning the understanding of authority upside down. The first will be last. The greatest will be least, and the one who exercises true authority is the one who serves others first. Our misshapen world shows us too many examples of power and authority misused for personal gain and political profit. As both citizens and disciples, we are called to speak truth to power and direct the attention of elected officials to use their authority to promote the common good.



**Prayer:**

Remind us once more of the call to humility and to service. Strengthen our resolve to resist the corrupting influence and misuse of power. As we identify and name the structures of privilege and power that we have benefitted help us engage these for the good of others in our work for justice.

**Fasting:**

- Today, fast from your ego and examine more closely the truth of who you are, a truth that can lead to greater humility but also to greater empowerment.

**Almsgiving:**

- Explore current issues, discussions, and intersections between religion and politics. The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, a non-partisan, non-advocacy organization, seeks to promote a deeper understanding of these issues through research, discussion, and dialogue.

Web site:

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life

Address:

[www.pewforum.org/](http://www.pewforum.org/)

## Thursday, March 4, 2010

### Scripture:

There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

Lk. 16:19-23

### Quote:

God does not want people — namely, all men and women — to be poor, because Our Creator cries out to all through each one of those living in poverty. God tells us quite simply that the poor, like the rich who are blinded by their wealth, are mutilated beings; the poor are mutilated by circumstances which lie far from their control, while the rich are mutilated by their handfuls and with their collusion. Both are thereby prevented from finding that interior freedom to which God unceasingly calls all humanity.

Pontifical Council "Cor Unum," *World Hunger, A Challenge for All: Development in Solidarity* (October 4, 1996), no. 63

### Reflection:

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that in this world we cannot struggle as solitary beings: we struggle together. The poor and the rich are connected and united in the sacred way of solidarity, and it will only be in the depth of listening and relationship that we can learn from one another, live in true community with one another, and ultimately find freedom for ourselves and all of humanity.



### Prayer:

Lord, look upon us, we who are so often blinded by the advantages and comfort we were born into, which cause us to see ourselves as "apart" from the rest of suffering humanity. Help us, as rich and poor, to grow in solidarity and work with one another to establish a just world for all.

### Fasting:

- Today, fast from perceiving the poor as "other." When you think of or read about situations of suffering in the world, remind yourself that those experiencing these things are part of your human family—a brother, sister, mother, or father.

### Almsgiving:

- USCCB and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) call on one million Catholics in the United States to confront global poverty. Advocate to end hunger, disease, conflict, and other issues that affect the lives of our brothers and sisters worldwide.

#### Web site:

Catholics Confront Global Poverty

#### Address:

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/>

## Friday, March 5, 2010

World Day of Prayer

### Scripture:

He had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, sold as a slave. They shackled his feet with chains; collared his neck in iron, till his prediction came to pass, and the word of the LORD proved him true. The king sent and released him; the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him lord over his palace, ruler over all his possessions. Psalm 105:17-21

### Quote:

The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. Already the Second Vatican Council had pointed to “slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as instruments of gain rather than free and responsible persons” as “infamies” which “poison human society, debase their perpetrators” and constitute “a supreme dishonour to the Creator” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27). Such situations are an affront to fundamental values which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person. The alarming increase in the trade in human beings is one of the pressing political, social and economic problems associated with the process of globalization.

Pope John Paul II, *Letter on the “Twenty-first Century Slavery-The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings” Conference* (May 15, 2002)

### Reflection:

In the twenty-first century, as in biblical times, trafficking in persons continues to be a serious affront to human dignity: an estimated 27 million people currently live in some form of slavery around the world. As Pope John Paul II recognized, those serious about protecting human dignity must not only work to end human trafficking, but also the injustices, especially social and economic, that make people vulnerable to becoming trafficked persons.



### Prayer:

Show us a way forward, O Lord. Guide our work as we seek to liberate people from the injustice of slavery. Grace us with the fortitude to eliminate the poverty and marginalization that contribute to trafficking human beings in the world today.

### Fasting:

- Today, fast from buying and/or consuming coffee and chocolate that are not Fair Trade items, to ensure that no human beings enslaved in any way contributed to making a profit for the coffee and chocolate distributors.

### Almsgiving:

- Stop Trafficking is a web forum for exchange among religious congregations and their collaborating organizations to promote awareness of human trafficking and to work to end it.

Web site:

Stop Trafficking - Religious Congregations

Address:

<http://www.stopenslavement.org/index.html>

## Saturday, March 6, 2010

### Scripture:

Shepherd your people with your staff,  
the flock of your inheritance,  
That dwells apart in a woodland, in the midst of Carmel.  
Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old;  
As in the days when you came from the land of Egypt,  
show us wonderful signs. Who is there like you,  
the God who removes guilt and pardons sin  
for the remnant of his inheritance;  
Who does not persist in anger forever, but delights rather in clemency.

Micah 7:14-15, 18

### Quote:

Catholic teaching has a long and rich tradition in defending the right to migrate. Based on the life and teachings of Jesus, the Church's teaching has provided the basis for the development of basic principles regarding the right to migrate for those attempting to exercise their God-given human rights. . . We recognize the phenomenon of migration as an authentic sign of the times. We see it in both our countries through the suffering of those who have been forced to become migrants for many reasons. . . Such a sign is a call to transform national and international social, economic, and political structures so that they may provide the conditions required for the development for all, without exclusion and discrimination against any person in any circumstance.

Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, *Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope* (Jan. 22, 2003), # 28 and #102

### Reflection:

Recalling the plight of the Israelites and their Exodus to a find a home after their release from captivity in Egypt, the Catholic Church has long defended the right to migrate. At the same time, the Church also recognizes the need to heal those broken structures and systems that cause the devastating poverty and violence in developing countries that cause people to leave. As Catholics, we must work to protect the dignity of migrants as well as to become informed about, and support, the work to change conditions in their countries of origin.



### Prayer:

Lord God, help us to welcome our fleeing sisters and brothers without fear. Inspire us to challenge attitudes that create resentment and anger towards new immigrants. Enlighten us about the causes of poverty and violence these immigrants are fleeing from.

### Fasting:

- Fast from visiting a website you normally visit and instead spend fifteen minutes learning about the U.S. Catholic Bishops' plan for comprehensive immigration reform at [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org).

### Almsgiving:

- Learn more about the issue and status of immigration. Send an email to your Congresspersons promoting a plan for immigration reform that better respects the dignity of immigrants.

#### Web site:

Justice for Immigrants Action Network

#### Address:

[www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)