



SUNDAY REFLECTION

An Irish joke insists that when one comes to the fork in the road one should take it. But we know only too well that we are constantly standing at the crossroads with decisions to be made. The success or failure of our lives depends on the choices we make. So often the Bible teaches us that fear is a sign that this is the right path to take and not to go on the easy or popular way. Some psychologists insist that laziness is the cause of much mental illness, when, in contrast to a Beethoven stricken by deafness, we refuse to take life as it is and play the cards we have.

Jesus hungry, thirsty and weak, after His time in the desert, chose to respond to temptation with decisive answers from the ultimate weapon, the Word of God, found in Deuteronomy. Where else can or should I go for the wisdom that will enable me to live life to the full? Jesus did not lead from behind but went ahead of His grumbling disciples. Is there any other model for me to choose?

STEWARDSHIP: Today's first reading describes the offering of first fruits the people of Israel were to present to the Lord in thanksgiving for their deliverance from Egypt and the gift of the promised land. Is my offering at today's Mass an appropriate response to the many blessings the Lord has given me?

Fulton J. Sheen

“You are not tempted because you are evil; you are tempted because you are human.”

READINGS SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

17 MAR '19

Gn. 15:5-12, 17-18: Good makes a solemn covenant with Abram. His descendants will be numerous and they will inherit the land.

Phil. 3:17-4: We are measured by the standards of heaven, our true home, not the standards of the earth.

Lk. 9:28-36: A single vision that echoes or prefigures much of the Good News about Jesus – His baptism, His passion and death, His fulfillment of the law and the prophets, His resurrection and His second coming.

S. F. Smiley

“That which is often asked of God, is not so much His will and way, as His approval of our way.”

ST. JOSEPH'S TABLE 16 – 17 MARCH

Next weekend you are invited to partake in a practice that was introduced to our parish several years ago; that is the ST. Joseph Table. We have simplified the tradition to that of asking you to bring in bread which after the Masses of the weekend will be distributed to the local food banks to help in feeding those in need. In this way we carry on one component of the ancient tradition, charity for those in need. The table for the collection will be in the corner of the Commons by the pass-through for the kitchen.

Saint Joseph: the Original “Quiet Man”

It'll soon be that time of year when some people will continue an old custom of gathering around their televisions to watch that classic movie, *The Quiet Man*. But today we are not talking about St. Patrick now. Today the focus is on a feast day that tends to be especially dear to our Italian brothers and sisters, but which we all have a reason to celebrate. It's the feast day of the original “quiet man”—St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster father to the Son of God. The month of March is traditionally dedicated to St. Joseph with his feast day falling on March 19th. And today the specific item of interest is the tradition of the **Saint Joseph Table**.

For a man who said, according to Sacred Scripture, not much of anything, St. Joseph had an impact on the world like few men before or after him. Of course, being chosen for the job God chose him for would leave any man speechless. *Stand by Mary during improbable circumstances. Done. Be there for Mary as she delivers the Messiah among stabled animals. Done. Hold the lamp higher. Got it. Protect Jesus and Mary at all costs. Spirit them*

away to Egypt to avoid the murderous King Herod. Done. Oh, yes. And scrape together a living for your family while you're at it.

Maybe that's why Joseph never spoke. He was too tired!

While speaking may not have been St. Joseph's strong suit, he has proven himself a great listener over the centuries, interceding on behalf of countless men, women and children who have turned to him in prayer.

St. Joseph and the prayers of Sicily

With the wonderful devotion so many Americans of Italian heritage show on St. Joseph's feast day, you might be forgiven for thinking that Our Lady had married a nice Italian boy. But there's a special reason why St. Joseph is held in such high esteem in Italian American circles. Two days after St. Patrick's Day, on the Feast of St. Joseph, many Catholic parishes can be found celebrating a tradition called "Saint Joseph's Table." It originated in Sicily and is said to date back to the Middle Ages.

According to tradition, the people on the Italian island of Sicily, in the grip of a severe drought, prayed to St. Joseph asking him to intercede and get them some rain. St. Joseph came through in a big way and Sicily eventually celebrated with a huge feast, inviting the most needy among them to come and share in the bounty resulting from St. Joseph's friendship.

In keeping with that tradition of almsgiving, Saint Joseph Tables of today are often used as fundraising opportunities, with the proceeds from selling the various delicacies on the table going to the needy of the community.

Did someone say "delicacies?"

What sort of delicacies? Cakes. Breads. Cookies. Bottles of wine. There's only one catch: no meat. The Feast of St. Joseph does happen during lent, after all, and abstinence rules were a whole lot stricter in the Middle Ages than they are these days. If you're going to preserve a tradition, preserve it right! Serving spaghetti at your parish in celebration of St. Joseph's Day? No meat in the sauce! You might, however, sprinkle breadcrumbs over the top to commemorate the sawdust of St. Joseph's day job (which many people do).

That's just a brief look at one aspect of devotion to St. Joseph. In addition to being patron of the Universal Church, he's also patron for some very specific areas: fathers, workers, travelers, immigrants, a happy death, cabinetmakers, carpenters, confectioners, craftsmen, engineers, families, house hunters, laborers, people in doubt, pioneers...you get the idea...St. Joseph was, and it seems will always be, a very busy guy.

Why are the Gloria and Alleluia omitted during Lent?_

At Mass last weekend I mentioned that for the Season of Lent there would be some changes made in the Mass to emphasize the more somber mood of Lent: the ministers kneeling during the penitential rite while the choir chants the Kyriea and exiting the church without a sung hymn but only instrumental music. But, there are other changes that take place routinely each year.

The Lenten season is marked by two very distinct liturgical omissions. Neither the hymn known as the Gloria (Glory to God in the Highest) nor the Alleluia verse sung before the Gospel is permitted during the entire 40 days of Lent (with a few small exceptions).

Why is that?

First of all, the Gloria is a hymn that celebrates the coming of the Lord using words from the angels at Christ's birth. The Church during Lent returns in spirit to a time when the people of God were in exile, waiting for the Messiah to come and save them. It is a similar season of expectation as is Advent, but instead of awaiting Christ's birth from the womb of Mary, the Christian people await Christ's second "birth" from the womb of the sepulcher.

Secondly, following this same spirit of exile, the Church joins Moses and the Israelites as they wander in the desert for 40 years. It is a time of agony and purification, one where the faithful join together in saying, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137:4) The word "Alleluia" is rooted in a Hebrew expression that means "praise the Lord" and is thus omitted during Lent.

As a result, our focus in Lent is not in rejoicing, but in mourning our sins, looking at those things that prevent us from an authentic relationship with God. Once these are removed through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we are able to rejoice again at Easter, for it is not only Christ's resurrection that we celebrate, but our own rebirth in the spirit.

Similar to a woman experiencing labor pangs before birth, so the Christian people "groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:23).



LENTEN WEEKDAY REFLECTIONS

Monday 11 March

Most of us like a new suit or a new coat; and, maybe for a time, we hang it up regularly and brush it. But then we get used to it and it becomes worn. Our behavior tends to be the same and we allow ourselves to become half-hearted or lazy. Lent is a good time for a repair and renew job, countering slack or selfish behavior with positive efforts. Leviticus tells us to be holy like God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, while Jesus says the way we treat our neighbor will be judged as if it were done to Himself. Come on: no slacking! Fresh Lenten efforts!

Tuesday 12 March

'Come here or I'll smack you', said the mother to her child. The child didn't come and the mother didn't smack him. That child may grow up not valuing his mother's (or others') words. Isaiah has a strong sense of God's sincerity and the dependability of what God says. Jesus teaches us not to babble, mindlessly at prayer, but to make every word count. Do we try, at prayer, to be sincere, fresh, genuine; or is our prayer a bit faded, mechanical? Time for a renewed Lenten effort at our prayer: true time with God? The wise priest said that, when he felt he was too busy to pray, that was a sure sign that he needed more (not less) time at prayer. For Lent, might we try to set aside a fixed (or slightly greater) time for prayer?

Wednesday 13 March

We all know the story of the tortoise and the hare – and that it is a true story, even though it never happened. The Book of Jonah is not historical, but a cautionary tale, with amusing details like even the farm animals being on hard tack for the general fast. But Jesus uses it to call for repentance in His hearers. (The queen of Sheba was historical, possibly on the ancient spice caravan route.) A valuable Lenten exercise is to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, or even without that, seriously to examine our consciences about our lives and how we are living them. Need for change?

Thursday 14 March

“The Book of Esther is a moving story set in the court of a Persian king who makes an exiled Jew his wife. It has all the drama and fantasy of the Arabian Nights, with the king’s pompous vizier Haman who plots to exterminate all the Jewish exiles. Ester desperately begs God’s help – and the tables are turned on Haman.

Jesus tells us to beg earnestly for God’s help. Some people think my prayer of petition will change me, to understand and accept God’s will (rather than changing God’s mine). Whatever the truth, today’s Word encourages us to pray fervently and expectantly for God’s care.

Friday 15 March

Although football referees sometimes make mistakes, usually they are fair and unbiased. Most of the time, we have no one other than ourselves to judge what we think, or say, or do, and Ezekiel tells us that we must take responsibility for our own behavior, good or bad. Jesus tells us much the same, with the additional exhortation to follow the higher standards. That includes having integrity. We can’t have double standards. If we’re not in harmony with each other, we can’t be in harmony with God.

Saturday 16 March

John is the only evangelist who calls himself “the beloved disciple’. Was he, or did he just imagine it or desire it? Some of us have relatives who call themselves our ‘favorite’. During the Babylonian exile, the Deuteronomic author wrote up ideas that became central in Judaism: that the Jews were God’s Chosen People, they were a People of the Book, and that God dwelt with His People in His temple. That special love pact, the Covenant, distinguishes the Jews to this day and, in a sense, we Christians have borrowed it for ourselves. If it’s true, we need to live up to our side of the bargain by striving for perfection. – And isn’t that what Lent is all about? Come on, no slacking! Fidelity to our Lenten resolutions.

PRAYERS

Lord Jesus, I come today as a sinner. Give me courage to face up to my weakness. Give me also the insight to see that You are with me when I fail and when I repent. Let me see that my life is Your gift to me, and let my loving response be my gift to You and Your people. Keep me steadfast in prayer and always in good humor during this sometimes dark and sometimes bright days of Lent.

Begin Lent with this powerful prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

O Victorious Prince, most humble guardian of the Church of God and of faithful souls, who with such charity and zeal took part in so many conflicts and gained such great victories over the enemy; for the conservation and protection of the honor and glory we all owe to God, as well as for the promotion of our salvation, come, we pray Thee, to our assistance, for we are continually besieged with such great perils by Thy enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil; and as Thou was a leader for the people of God through the desert, so also be our faithful leader and companion through the desert of this world, until Thou conduct us safely into the happy land of the living, in that blessed fatherland from which we are all exiles. Amen.

Pray for spiritual protection during Lent with this prayer

Defend us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all dangers of mind and body. And through the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever Virgin, Mother of God, of St. Joseph, of Thy Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the saints, in Thy loving kindness grant us safety and peace; that, all adversities and errors being overcome, Thy Church may serve Thee in security and freedom.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR READING DURING LENT

“Abandonment to Divine Providence”

Jean-Pierre de Caussade

“The Pilgrim’s Progress”

John Bunyan

“Introduction to the Devout Life”

St. Francis de Sales

“The Interior Castle”

St. Teresa of Avila

“The Dark Night of the Soul”

St. John of the Cross

“The Story of a Soul”

St. Theresa of the Little Flower Therese of Lisieux

PASTOR'S UP-COMING SCHEDULE

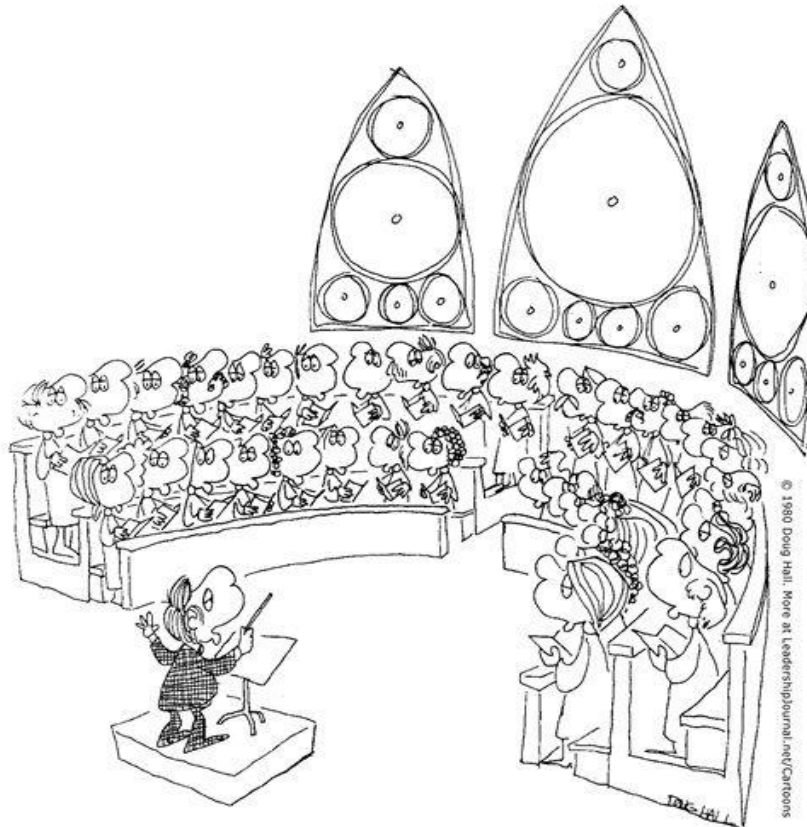
- Saturday 9 Mar Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass for 1st Sunday Lent 5:00 p.m.
Meeting
- Sunday 10 Mar 1st Sunday Lent
Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. Brig
- Monday 11 Mar Priest's Day Off
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Brig 7:40 p.m.
- Tuesday 12 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Mass Willow Creek 10:30 a.m.
St. Brides Correctional Facility
- Wednesday 13 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Mass PCRS 10:00 a.m. Followed by Confessions
Indian Creek Correctional Facility 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday 14 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Mass 6:30 p.m.
Lenten Lessons 7:00 p.m.
- Friday 15 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Adoration 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Stations of the Cross and Benediction 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday 16 Mar Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass 2nd Sunday of Lent 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday 10 Mar 2nd Sunday of Lent
Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. Brig 7:00 p.m.



Be who God meant you to be
and you will set the world on
fire.

- St. Catherine of Siena

AZ QUOTES



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"The sopranos and altos will sing 'Hallelujah,'
the tenors will sing, 'Amen,' and the basses will sing
'Oo-wah, diddle-dee, doo-wah.' "