



SUNDAY REFLECTION

Eternal God, the light of the minds that know Thee,
the joy of the hearts that love Thee,
the strength of the will that serve Thee:
grant us so to know Thee that we may truly love Thee,
so to love Thee that we may fully serve Thee,
whom to serve is perfect freedom.
(Gelasian Sacramentary)

An invitation to conversion is at the heart of today's liturgy of the word. Conversion means that we stop doing what we are doing (or not doing, as the case might be) and start to do something else. But real conversion requires a true change of heart, and that requires motivation. The exodus of the chosen people is symbolic of the detachment and conversion we are called to follow in a special way during Lent. Their total dependence on God needed also their complete fidelity to Him who had brought them into freedom if they were to benefit from the abundant blessings He bestowed upon them in the desert. For us, too, in the wilderness of our own life's journey, fidelity to Christ, who came on earth to lead us to our promised land in heaven, must be complete. He not only instructs us by His words and deeds, He also gives us the Eucharist as sustenance for the journey. This great sacrament is His pledge of being ever present with those He has redeemed, and our partaking of it is our acknowledgement of that pledge: 'As often as you do this, do it in memory of Me.'

STEWARDSHIP C READINGS Vigil Mass, 7:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.: The parable in today's Gospel clearly warns that we, like the fig tree will be judged by our fruit. While God mercifully provides us with time and opportunity, let us give witness to our faith with deeds of kindness and generosity!

St. Thomas Aquinas
"A man's heart is light when he will what God wills.

STEWARDSHIP A READINGS 8:30 MASS: When Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water, He opened the door for a life-changing relationship with Him. Scripture says her testimony drew many others to Him as well. We too, must be ready to respond whenever and wherever the Lord speaks to us and be prepared for it to change our lives!

READINGS FOR FOURTH WEEK

31 MAR '19

Cycle C Masses Vigil 5:00 p.m. 7:00 a.m. 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.

Jos. 5:9-12: All transition is difficult, eliciting choice and change. In the biblical narrative, the entry into the land, under Joshua, marked a major transition from nomadic wandering to settled living.

2 Cor. 5:17-21: This text balances nicely between the First Reading and the Gospel as in the First Reading, new realities call for new practices. As in the Gospel, reconciliation stands at the center of Christ's mission and ours.

Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32: See if you can listen in a fresh way to this great parable of the Prodigal Son by noticing that the story is unresolved at the end and by asking yourself why Luke leaves it open-ended like that.

Irene Lare, (*French resistance leader*)

“Vengeance is too little. Pardon is very much bigger and greater.”

Cycle A 8:30 a.m. Mass 2nd Scrutiny

1 Sm. 16:1, 6-7, 10-13: Israel’s first king, Saul, was failing. The Lord sends the judge named Samuel, secretly, to a small town to find and anoint the next king. Samuel goes and invites the town’s elders and their sons to a ritual sacrifice.

Eph. 5:8-14: The Ephesians were pagan converts. This reading is a reflection on the contrasts in their lives before and after their baptism. The closing quotation is from an early baptismal hymn.

Jn. 9:1-41: Early Jewish followers of Jesus began to suffer persecution and expulsion from synagogues. Saint John’s gospel tried to get the indecisive converts to make their final commitment to Christ. Here John turns an early memory of a cure by Jesus into an extended teaching on conversion and its consequences.

Thomas Wilson

“The greatest of all disorders is to think we are whole, and need no help.”



RCIA

What does Lent have to do with those becoming Catholic?

In Lent, RCIA participants move into the final period of preparation for the sacraments. They have been nourished by the graces of various liturgical Rites throughout the RCIA process, which have helped them to embrace God’s call. In Lent, God pours purifying and enlightening graces upon them, through the spiritual preparation they receive in RCIA sessions, the special Rites that mark the Sundays of Lent, and the prayers offered for them by the faithful.

How should the RCIA process encourage all Catholics to enter into Lent more deeply?

The Church, in the RCIA process, calls this proximate time immediately preceding initiation the period of “Purification and Enlightenment” for those in the RCIA process. That is what Lent is meant to be for all of us, who are already receiving the graces poured out through the sacraments of the Church. The Church calls us to reflect on our own baptismal graces, through prayer, penance, and almsgiving. We are also called to pray for those who are approaching the Easter sacraments of initiation. We are called to examine our lives through increased prayer and

penitential practice; identify sins that keep us from becoming holy; purify ourselves through the sacrament of Reconciliation; and express our gratitude to God through the love of the poor by giving from our material and spiritual bounty. Throughout Lent we enter into the Passion of Jesus Christ. We turn our hearts and minds in prayer to our own Way of the Cross, we call our own wounds by name, and we give them to the Divine Healer. When we behold the empty tomb at Easter we can be filled with joy, believing with complete certainty that those chains that bind us have been broken, and that life, not death is our birthright.

How can every Catholic make Lent a time of “purification and enlightenment”?

We can attend weekday Mass. We can reflect on the Creed, taking each statement of belief and asking ourselves if we do believe, and what it means in our everyday lives. We can go to adoration and to Confession. We can attend our parish penance service. We can pray the Stations of the Cross, pray the Liturgy of the Hours, pray the rosary. We must pray, every day. We can fast from food, TV, foul language, gossip, and the list goes on and on. We can give alms, in a genuinely sacrificial manner, to the poor. As Catholics we know all of these things. It is not a lack of “things to do” that have many of us scratching our heads on Holy Thursday wondering why Lent was really not any different for us than any other forty days throughout the year. What we lack is a conversion of the heart. We don’t have to seek far to hear God speak to us. The Church in her wisdom provides us in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass what our hearts yearn to hear. In the Lenten liturgies the Church prays what she believes and teaches, and in word and sacrament the Lord directs us toward his Divine heart.

FIRST SCRUTINY

This time of scrutiny, the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent, what is it? What is its purpose? It is not simply to critique and assess the readiness of the elect, those preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. This was done at the Rite of Election. The purpose of the scrutinies is for each individuals, members of the elect, to look within themselves and uncover, and understand all that is weak, defective, or sinful in their hearts. It has a second purpose, as well, to bring out, and strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good in them.

As the elect continue on this journey realize one very important fact. None of us, no one reading this, and no one on this planet is perfect. Each one of us has made and continues to make wrong and bad decisions in our lives. This time of scrutiny is a time for honesty. This is a time for all of us to look at ourselves and see what it is that is holding us back, preventing us from getting closer to Jesus.

In the readings proclaimed at the 8:30 a.m. Mass today, we hear many references to water and thirst. In the Book of Exodus, we hear the people complaining to Moses and to God about their thirst. These were the same people who had been enslaved in Egypt, but at least, there, they had food and water. Now with Moses, leading them to the Promised Land, they had neither. So, they grumbled as to where this journey was taking them, and hardships they had to endure. Before we touch on today’s Gospel, we have to understand a little of the tension between the Jewish people and the Samaritans. After the death of King Solomon, the Jewish kingdom split into two: northern Israel with its capital Samaria and southern Judea with its capital Jerusalem. The Samaritans were viewed as a sinful people, because they worshipped idols, their current

fads. The Jews maintained their belief in one God. So, though they had common roots, Jewish people were forbidden to associate, nor talk with the Samaritans.

In the Gospel of John, we hear the story of Jesus at the well with the Samaritan woman. Jesus approaches the woman at the well with the Samaritan woman. Jesus approaches the woman at the well and asks her for some water. She immediately responds with, "How do you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, for water?" To which Jesus replies, if you had the gift of faith, and knew who I am, you would be asking me for the gift of living water.

The Gospel continues with Jesus revealing to her the nature of her life and that she had 5 husbands. This was her scrutiny. This was her time to look at herself, to view her life and see the falseness, the shallowness of it. This passage ends with the woman speaking of the Messiah, to which Jesus simply says, "I am He."

Do you see the similarity in these readings and with what is going on with your life, right now? The waters of Baptism, your belief in Jesus, these have the promise of eternal life. This is the journey to the Promised Land. This is not, however, a simple road. It will entail hardship, at times. It will involve honesty. It will require one to look at their life and how it is being lived. This time of scrutiny is very important. It starts each of us on a road of looking at ourselves, at our motives and where we need to make corrections. This process of introspection (looking within) will last a lifetime. The more we focus on Jesus, and then look at where we are, we will know what it is that needs to be addressed.

It was said at the beginning that there were two purposes to the scrutinies. The second is to bring out, strengthen and understand all that is good within you. The Catholic Christian life is not, and will never be simply focused on the removal of evil. That is not what Jesus was about. It is a positive life. It is one of doing good acts, helping people, being truly concerned about people.

We try to live our lives in a way that Jesus will be glorified and honored. We do this by being like Him. I can't help people giving them money, if I am poor and have no money to give. I can't help people across the street, if I, myself, am blind and cannot see the other side of the street. The time of scrutiny is also a time to know what goodness we do possess. Do you have a smiling personality? Do you feel sad when you see someone suffering? Do you have time to give to people? These are all qualities that others need to receive. Give what you do have. So the scrutinies involve our seeing where we are lacking, and also seeing what gifts we do have. We pray to our Father in heaven to help us eliminate those aspects of our lives that prevent us from living the life of Christ. And at the same time to help us grow to be like His Son.

As the time draws near for the elects' reception of Baptism, or Confirmation and the Eucharist, as the rest of us draw near to the celebration of the Easter event, we all must spend it in preparation of ourselves. Allow the words of the Gospels to fill our hearts and reshape our lives. Allow Jesus' life to inspire us and lead us. Look within and see what commitment we have made. The time of scrutiny is a positive time. It is a time of opportunity. It is our, each of our personal time.

LITURGY

What Is the Sacred Liturgy? After Vatican II, when the word liturgy sprang into more common usage, its definition (from the Greek leitourgia) – the work of the people or work on behalf of

the people – soon resulted in an emphasis solely on the first, rather than the more important second understanding. Some explain this as a consequence of the Council’s call for “full, active and conscious participation” (SC 2 § 14) in the worship of the Church as the “right and duty” of the Christian people, particularly as individuals and the entire assembly gradually assumed a more active role in liturgical celebrations. It is true that, immediately after the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the tendency was to focus on the assembly’s role in the celebration of the Liturgy while failing, perhaps, to recognize the more important “work of God” being accomplished in the assembly’s midst. While a better balance in understanding both aspects of the Liturgy now exists, an even greater grasp of what the Church believes and teaches about the Sacred Liturgy will bring forth much fruit for the life of the Church. The Sacred Liturgy is the Church’s official public and communal worship. While the celebration of the Eucharist is the Church’s principal act of worship, the Liturgy also includes the celebration of the six additional sacraments, the official daily prayer of the Church (the Liturgy of the Hours), and liturgies for special celebrations. As the Church’s official worship, each of these liturgies has at its heart the celebration of the “Mystery of our Faith” – that is, the sacred passion, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This mystery, known as the Paschal Mystery, is the continuing work of our redemption by Christ and through his Church. Vatican II’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy reminds us that the Old Testament, as the history of God’s amazing deeds among the people of Israel, was “but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God”(SC 5 § 2; cf. St. Augustine). By his obedience to the Father’s will and plan of salvation and by his redemptive self-sacrifice, Jesus, the new Adam, destroyed the power of sin and death and made possible eternal life. The Gospels tell us that, as he hung upon the cross, there came forth from Jesus’ wounded side blood and water – understood in time as symbolic of the mystery of the Church – a mystery made manifest at Pentecost in the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Apostles, witnesses and believers. Filled with the power of the Spirit, they grasped ever more clearly the mystery of Jesus’ death and resurrection as the way of salvation for all people. In time, leitourgia in the New Testament referred to the participation of early Christians in the “work of God,” the continuing work of their redemption (Cf. Jn 17.4). While leitourgia also referred at times to the proclamation of the good news and charitable works, it referred particularly to the gathering of small Christian communities for prayer and, especially, for the “breaking of the bread”(Acts 2: 42). There, at the meal, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, they “knew him” as he broke the bread. They recognized him as being wholly present in their midst and continuing in them his redemptive work of Calvary. Held as sacred by the Church through the ages, the Sacred Liturgy is understood as an “exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ”(SC 7 § 2-3). It is he who, as both victim and priest, continues his self-offering to the Father, interceding on our behalf at every Liturgy. It is he, as head of his body the Church, his Mystical Body on earth, who makes present in the midst of the assembly his work of redemption. It is he who also joins to his eternal sacrifice the humble self-offering of the gathered faithful. And it is through him, with him, and in him that our grateful praise and thanksgiving reach the Father in the power of the Spirit. The Liturgy is, then, our participation in Jesus’ prayer, in his obedience and self-offering to the Father. Through that participation, the Liturgy becomes our work, the “work of the Church.” For this reason the Constitution on the Liturgy says that every liturgical celebration is “a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy”(SC 7 § 2-3). Thus, the Church to

this day proclaims, celebrates and rejoices in the saving work of Jesus Christ – the Paschal Mystery – which is made present principally in the Mass, but also in all liturgical celebrations. We, as Catholics, must understand every liturgical celebration first and foremost as the work of God – through, with, and in Jesus Christ; it is his saving work for us and in us, and only then can we understand it as “our work” of responding with praise, thanksgiving, supplication and fidelity. This understanding is, with the Spirit’s help, the way to a deeper experience of a most profound mystery of our faith.



LENTEN WEEKDAY REFLECTIONS

MONDAY 25 MARCH THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Christ Jesus has left us the Eucharist as a memorial of Himself. ‘Do this in memory of me ... as a memorial to me ... so that I may be remembered’. In communion we are united in a very special manner with Him – with His death, His resurrection and His ascension to the right hand of the Father. Today in a special way we remember His dedication to the Father’s will, an obedience foreshadowed in that of His mother Mary at the annunciation. The Communion at Mass is in a special way the memorial of Christ’s passion. All our lives, too, should be a continuous act of obedience to the Father’s will. The Eucharist is the sacrament of this obedience. We pray that through our communion with Christ, Christ’s obedience may become a reality in our lives..

TUESDAY 26 MARCH

Father. Forgive Us as We Forgive...

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (92838-2845) has a lengthy and fine reflection on this petition of the Our Father. Among other things it has the following reflection (2845): ‘There is no limit to this essentially divine forgiveness, whether one speaks of ‘sins’ as in Luke (11:4), or ‘debts’ as in Matthew (6:12). We are always debtors: ‘Owe no one anything, except to love one another.’ The communion of the Holy Trinity is the source and criterion of truth in every relationship. It is lived out in prayer, above all in the Eucharist.’ The text goes on to cite St. Cyprian: ‘God does not accept the sacrifice of a sower of disunion, but commands that he depart from the altar so that he may first be reconciled with his brother. For God can be appeased only by prayers that make peace. To God, the better offering is peace, brotherly concern and a people made one in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’

WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH

Honest Living of the Gospel

'Whoever is called 'to teach Christ' must first seek 'the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus'; he or she must suffer 'the loss of all things...' in order to 'gain Christ and be found in Him,' and 'to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and (to) share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that if possible (he or she) may attain the resurrection from the dead' (Phil. 3:8-11). From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim Him, to 'evangelize,' and to lead others to the 'yes' of faith in Jesus Christ. But at the same time the need to know this faith better makes itself felt ...' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 428-429)

THURSDAY 28 MARCH

God's Commandments Are for All Ages

The Commandments, the Ten Commandments, which according to Jewish and Christian tradition, were revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai form part of the Lenten catechesis. An occasion for reflecting on them is presented by the first reading for Saturday of the first week and on Wednesday of this third week. The 'Ten Commandments' or Decalogue (the 'Ten Words' in biblical language) throughout sacred history have been seen as a summary of God's revealed will for humanity. They have been taken as valid for all time. In Irenaeus' words: 'Through the Decalogue, God prepared the human person to become his friend and to live in harmony with his neighbor.... The words of the Decalogue remain likewise for us Christians. Far from being abolished they have received amplification and development from the fact of the coming of the Lord in the flesh.' As the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it 920164a0: 'In fidelity to Scripture and in conformity with the example of Jesus, the tradition of the Church has acknowledged the primordial importance and significance of the Decalogue.' This same work wisely remarks (20157) that the Decalogue must first be understood in the context of the Exodus, God's greater liberating event as the center of the Old Covenant.' Decalogue recalls Covenant, God's saving intervention in history and throughout history, from Moses through Jesus' teaching and the Church's continued proclamation.

FRIDAY 29 MARCH

Love of God and Neighbor

This is one of a number of places in the Scriptures where the essence of the Jewish Christian understanding of God and of what that means for human relations is expressed in few words. The formula 'love of God and love of neighbor' is impossible to be improved upon. It says it all.

SATURDAY 30 MARCH

A Mixture of Pharisees and Tax-collectors

This passage is intended to prompt its hearers to rethink their lines of demarcation between who is acceptable and who is not. The arresting feature of the parable is that people's behavior is more often opposite to popular conception than true to it. Here, this is what we find with someone perceived to be a sinner, one of the groups of people for whom Luke has a particular concern.

PRAYER

Help me, eternal God,
to accept Your gift of the present moment.
It is the only moment I will ever have,
so let me inhabit it richly and fully,
and celebrate Your gift of life in abundance. Amen

PASTOR'S UP-COMING SCHEDULE

Saturday 23 Mar Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confirmation Retreat at Wakefield

Sunday 24 Mar 3rd Sunday Lent
Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. Scrutiny I 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m. Brig

Monday 25 Mar Priest's Day Off Annunciation of the Lord
Mass 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Confessions between the Masses
Brig 7:40 p.m.

Tuesday 26 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Parish Council

Wednesday 27 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Funeral A. E. Horton Vet. Cemetery 11:00 a.m.
Indian Creek Correctional Facility 5:30 p.m.

Thursday 28 Mar Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
PCRS Mass 10:00 a.m. Confessions to follow till 3:00 p.m.
Confessions 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Mass 6:30 p.m.
Lenten Lessons 7:00 p.m.

Friday 29 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 30 Mar Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass 4th Sunday of Lent 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 10 Mar 4th Sunday of Lent
Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. (Second Scrutiny), 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.
Brig 7:00 p.m.

IF YOU BELIEVE
WHAT YOU LIKE IN ^{THE} GOSPEL,
^{AND} what you
REJECT don't like,
IT IS NOT
THE GOSPEL YOU BELIEVE,
but YOURSELF.
ST. AUGUSTINE

Don't be a
"part-time"
Christian,
who demands
a full-time
God.

