

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Abundant Mercy

God, source of all goodness and mercy,
you restored Israel after their captivity,
and in Jesus, you restored us to life.
You have done great things, O Lord.
You have revived the wasteland of
our hearts
and quenched our thirst with living water.
Liberate us from the sins that
hold us captive.
May your mercy, Lord, lead us to
a deeper love
of you and our neighbors
so that your justice might wash over
all creation.
Filled with joy,
may we forever praise you for your
abundant grace
and be a sign of hope for those who despair,
a sign of love for those who hate,
and a sign of generosity for those who are
cold and selfish.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 13, 2016

Encounter the Lord



Today's Readings: Isaiah 43:16–21; Psalm 126:1–2, 2–3, 4–5, 6; Philippians 3:8–14; John 8:1–11. Over the course of the Lenten season, we have taken time to contemplate our sinfulness in order to respond to the call to repent. As the psalmist sings, we can rejoice at the marvelous things God has done in our lives. God's mercy is abundant, and when we are open to God's love, we can honestly approach Christ and seek forgiveness. The prophet Isaiah says that God will do something new; in the Gospel, we see this realized in Jesus' encounter with the adulterous woman. When she is accused before Jesus, he responds calmly, knowing that the scribes and the Pharisees were trying to test him. This encounter describes something new. Jesus' words allow the people to consider

their sin before judging others. How often do we point to others' sins? Jesus' encounter reveals this woman's sin, but it also reveals God's abundant mercy. She is forever changed because she has been touched by God's grace in Christ. Jesus doesn't ignore the Law of Moses, but by his simple actions, he profoundly says that God's mercy and compassion are the higher authority. Are you surprised by Jesus' actions? I think this helps us ponder the mystery of salvation. God never ceases to amaze us and save us in deeper ways. The Lord truly has done great things for us and filled us with joy. Review the places you encounter the Lord this Lent and give thanks for the places you've been transformed and deepened in communion with the Body of Christ.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 14, 2016

Entrap

When we lose focus on God, it is easier to fall into the trap of sin. Sin has a way of eating at us and often puts us at odds with others. Like the two elders in the First Reading, it sometimes seems easier to entrap someone in a lie to protect oneself. It's easier to ignore our sins and highlight the sin of others. The First Reading reminds us that God is just and merciful and that only God can judge. Reflect on the dark areas of your heart and ask the Light of the World to heal them. *Today's Readings: Daniel 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; John 8:12–20.*

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Prayer

We pay increased attention to the discipline of prayer during Lent. Think about how you approach the Lord in prayer. Do you feel comfortable revealing your needs or do you shy away from God and intimate conversation? No matter the situation, God longs to hear our prayers and takes delight in answering them. Today would be a great day to make pretzels and discuss prayer with another. *Today's Readings: Numbers 21:4–9; Psalm 102:2–3, 16–18, 19–21; John 8:21–30.*

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Faithfulness

The three young men in the Book of Daniel refuse to worship a false idol even though they are placed into a fiery furnace. Because of their faithfulness, they are saved from death. The Responsorial Psalm today blesses God for his wonderful works. We learn from Jesus that those who heed God's word are blessed and free. What idols have you refused because God's Word is planted in your heart? How has God rescued you from occasions of sin? If you have children, they can learn this story by acting it out as it is read. *Today's Readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; John 8:31–42.*

Thursday, March 17, 2016

I Am

This is the third time this week that we hear Jesus say, "I am." By using the divine name, Jesus is declaring his oneness with God, who sent him. Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant; those who refuse to believe will not inherit the Kingdom. How do you understand God's promise working in your life? To grow in intimacy with Jesus, take some time to sit in silence and ponder, "I am." *Today's Readings: Genesis 17:3–9; Psalm 105:4–5, 6–7, 8–9; John 8:51–59.*

Friday, March 18, 2016

Belief

The Jews in John's account of the Gospel are struggling to understand or believe that Jesus was sent from God as a sign of God's love and faithfulness. Some sought to test, or entrap, Jesus and prove him an impostor, just as they did with the prophet Jeremiah. Jesus tells the people to pay attention to the works that he performs as signs that the Father is in him. Jeremiah trusts in the Lord and sings praises to God. *Today's Readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–3a, 3bc–4, 5–6, 7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Solemnity of St. Joseph

The biblical accounts in which Joseph appears provide insight into his character. Joseph was a righteous man and obedient to God's will. He did not want to shame Mary in any way. Our tradition tells us that Joseph was a faithful and loving husband and father. He is the patron saint of a happy death, of workers, and carpenters. Joseph can teach us to remain steadfast when the circumstances are messy. Pray for the dying and for carpenters today. The National Shrine of St. Joseph is at St. Norbert Abbey, De Pere, Wisconsin. Consider taking time to learn more about the shrine and, if possible, plan a pilgrimage there. *Today's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27 and 29; Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18–21, 24a or Luke 2:41–51a.*

