

# GOD IS MERCY WITHIN MERCY WITHIN MERCY!

## fifth sunday of LENT



San Ignacio de Loyola Parish

March 13, 2016

### REFLECTION ON THE WORD

The "Scribes and the Pharisees" use the proscription of the law in an attempt to trap Jesus. He responds by confronting them with the reality of their own hard-heartedness and sinfulness. They slink away "one by one", leaving the adulterous woman alone to face Jesus. He extends mercy and compassion as well as judgment and a command to change her life. Do we dare to stand alone before Jesus, bare our own sinfulness and hear him say to us, *"Go, and from now on do not sin any more?"*



We begin the last third of the **Lenten season**. Even if we haven't been all that faithful to our chosen **Lenten practices**, it isn't too late now to resolve to open ourselves to encounters with Jesus so that we can approach Easter with a renewed spirit seeking new Life.

**Lent** is a time to encounter Jesus, turn from our sinfulness in repentance and seek divine mercy. The remarkable good news of this gospel is that by facing and repenting of our own sinfulness we establish new relations with those around us. Acknowledgment of our own sins and how we have hurt others builds us into stronger members of Christ's body.

**Word to reflect upon: mercy, compassion, a command to change, encounter Jesus**

#### PRAYER

May I grow closer to you with each day,  
my dearest God.  
May you fill my spiritual hunger with  
your overflowing love.

#### PARISH EXHORTATION FOR LENT V

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you,  
says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe!  
Plans to give you a future full of hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

### CHOOSING—ACTING LENT

Have you begun to really pay attention to the scriptures this **Lent**? Take *Isaiah 58:6-7* for example:

*This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:  
Releasing those bound unjustly;  
Untying the thongs of the yoke;  
Setting free the oppressed,  
Breaking every yoke;  
Sharing your bread with the hungry;  
Sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;  
Clothing the naked when you see them,  
And not turning your back on your own.*

There is a temptation to gloss over these words. The Old Testament from which they come may seem like irrelevant ancient history. But if we let them leap off of the page into our hearts, if we chew on them and digest them into our being, we may discover how fervently these words from Isaiah cry out to our current situation, attempting to shake us out of complacency and into compassionate action. They call us to a **Lenten practice** that is not purely personal. **Lent** is a powerful invitation to both personal and societal transformation. **If you want proof—just read Isaiah together with the front page of today's newspaper...**

**POPE FRANCIS** reminded us in his **Lenten message** from last year,

*"Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation of us Christians. Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience. Undertake a fast that will truly be life changing, not only for yourself, but for all God's holy people."*

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,  
1 Timothy 2:1*

**LET US PRAY TOGETHER TODAY** for the chronically ill: Sylvia Tasner, Jerry and Albert Vega, Fr. Vega, Rudy & Sonia Méndez, Maggie and Don Maziarz. **Let us join our hearts in prayer this week for all those who work to provide for loved ones, that God will give them serenity and peace in their service.**

## A Lenten Reflection from Henry Nouwen

*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted...*  
*Psalm 34*

Jesus was broken on the cross. He lived his suffering and death not as an evil to avoid at all costs but as a mission to embrace. We too are broken. We live with broken bodies, broken hearts, broken minds, or broken spirits. We suffer from broken relationships.

How can we live our brokenness? Jesus invites us to embrace our brokenness as he embraced the cross and live it as part of our mission. He asks us not to reject our brokenness as a curse from God that reminds us of our sinfulness but to accept it and put it under God's blessing for our purification and sanctification. Thus, our brokenness can become a gateway to new life.

**Remember again—and don't forget—your Christian identity: You are a forgiven sinner.**

**This Saturday, March 19th**, is the feast day of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and earthly father of Jesus, an ordinary sort of man on whom God relied to do great things.



Joseph had a special role in salvation history: God entrusted his only Son to him and it is in his role as guardian of the Holy Family that we honor him as Patron of the Universal Church. **Bless all families, O Lord especially the poor, those who lack a good home, those in exile. Grant them protectors like Saint Joseph. Amen.**

### Preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the Daily Examen of St. Ignatius

#### 1. Ask God for light.

I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.

#### 2. Give thanks.

The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.

#### 3. Review the day.

I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. Face your shortcomings.

I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.

#### 5. Look toward the day to come.

I ask where I need God in the day to come.

**Christians are not people of the cross.  
Christians are people of the empty tomb,  
the ones who know that  
every step on the way to the Light is Light.**

## THE PRACTICE OF LENT

### Praying with the Signs of the Times

In the powerful Vatican II document **Gaudium et Spes** (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*) the Church affirms "that in every age, the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel". As members of the Body of Christ, we too are called to this same responsibility to learn to read the signs of the times: recognizing them, praying over them and discerning their meaning for us in light of the Gospel. It is critical that we understand the times and what needs to be done now.

Reading the signs of the times is a spiritual discipline that tries to shake off the dominant secular messages that surround us and focus on an alternate positive "**Kairos**" perspective as followers of Christ. Instead of what's wrong with the world, **Kairos focuses** on what is coming to fullness in the present moment, seeking to understand what's ripe and ready for justice; what fruit is ready to be harvested; what we can glean from this field. **Kairos thinking** asks, what are the opportunities for an in-breaking of grace, for justice-making, for creativity and bold initiative in this situation? What can I support and assist in this? What is God doing and how am I called to be a partner? What possibilities are being born today in our community?

### Some Signs of the Times for 2016

- \* a world-wide hunger for spirituality
- \* the rise of religious fundamentalism
- \* the crisis of individualism (being selfish & self-centered)
- \* an increasingly uncivil society
- \* endless wars, glorification of violence
- \* increased promotion of intolerance and hatred
- \* world-wide increasing scarcities of food & water
- \* the ever-increasing pace of life

*What other Signs would you add to this list? What will you do about it? How will you pray on them? Will you plead with God to do something about them or will you ask him to show you what he expects of you?*

### *the voices of Lent*

**Where Am I Going?  
Where am I going on this glorious journey?  
To your house, of  
course.**

*Rumi*