

Lenten Reflection for the Week of March 6, 2016 – Sr. Jane Burger, D.C.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12

The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you...”

Psalm 34:2-3,4-5,6-7

“Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 5:15-21

“...God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation...”

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32.

...“While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion...”

The theme of this Sunday’s Readings focus on God’s overwhelming compassion and mercy for each of us. The first Reading expresses God’s compassion and mercy in removing from the Jewish people the reproach of Egypt which was humiliating for them as slaves in a foreign land as they celebrated their exodus with Passover. This feast expresses the Jewish people’s freedom as they partake of the fruits of their land. No longer do they need manna. The Second Reading is a call from God to be ministers of reconciliation, just as God is for us. The Gospel is the powerful story of a merciful father toward his two sons and brothers: an extravagant and wasteful but converted son/brother and a resentful and proud son/brother. One son is converted and returns to his father/family and the other becomes estranged and unforgiving.

REFLECTION:

- St. Vincent guides us, “... we have to stir our hearts to pity, make them sensitive to the sufferings and miseries of our neighbor and ask God to give us the true spirit of mercy which is the characteristic spirit of God ... Let’s ask God to give us this spirit of compassion and mercy, to fill us with it ...” Let’s reflect a little on how much we need mercy since we have to practice it toward others ...”¹
- Pope Francis guides us: “Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.” (MV 2)²; “Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us; Mercy; the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life.” (MV 2)²; “Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.” (MV 2)²
- Scripture guides us: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” Luke 6:36

PRAYER:

Oh forgiving, gentle and loving Good Shepherd, give me a heart that loves unconditionally, is accepting and forgiving of others. Fill me with special graces during this Lenten Season to build loving and gracious bridges between those that particularly challenge me. Help me to move more and more to a converted and loving heart as these special days unfold. Thank you! In Your name, I pray. Amen.

TRY THIS TODAY:

In your quiet time, ask Jesus to show you how He wants you to be God’s minister of reconciliation in your family, your activities as a Lady of Charity and other relationships. Ask Jesus to show you the areas in your life that He is calling you to extend forgiveness: toward yourself and others. Reflect on Psalms: Psalm 23:6; Psalm 25:6; Psalm 31:7; Psalm 57:9-11 and today’s Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. Where is God leading you as you continue on your Lenten Journey?

References:

- (1) Coste, St. Vincent de Paul Conferences, XI: 152, The Spirit of Mercy and Compassion August 6, 1656 p. 308.
- (2) Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus.