**Reflection for FIFTH WEEK OF LENT, 2015**

**Lorine Bourland, Vincentian Spiritual Moderator, Nashville, TN**

**SCRIPTURE: Reflect upon the Readings of** [**Jer 31:31-34**](http://usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/31:31)**,** [**Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15**](http://usccb.org/bible/psalms/51:3)**,** [**Heb 5:7-9**](http://usccb.org/bible/hebrews/5:7)**, and [Jn 12:20-33](http://usccb.org/bible/john/12:20)**

**The theme of our readings is anticipation of new life, of beginning anew. In the first reading, God tells the House of Israel that he is giving them a new covenant. He says, “I will be their God and they shall be my people”. He is writing his law on their hearts and forgiving their evildoing and remembers their sin no more. Even the Psalmist is crying for God to create in him a new heart. Paul tells us that it was through Christ’s suffering and death that we now have salvation.**

Today’s Gospel tells us that we must be like that grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies. We must be that seed that not only dies but rises to new life so that we may produce much fruit. Lent is about dying and rising. We must give way to our old self and let God make us new. Last week told us to rejoice that Lent was half over, rejoice that Lent was **only** half over. There is still time for us to change, to die to our own sinfulness so that the fruits of the new covenant can be brought forward.

The first Sunday of Lent, my pastor, Fr Pat Kibby said “don’t give up --- give in”. Don’t give up something for 40 days which will be waiting for you on day 41. **Give in** to God’s love; give in to his hand reaching out to guide us. Give in to dying to self. This has been a theme for me all Lent, not so much giving something up, but for me it has been “don’t give up – you can do it”, with God’s love and grace, to open myself to him, so that I can shed the old me and let him make me into a new creation.

We have certainly spent a cold hard winter and many things in our gardens have died. Some will not come back, they are gone forever, but some will come back and produce much fruit. We must be like the later. God gives us the grace to die to self, to shed the old me and give rise to a new creation. Don’t let selfishness, pettiness, pride and refusing to forgive keep us from being that new Easter Creation.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I reach for your hand, guide me, lead me where I need to go. Give me the grace not to give up, but to give in to allow you to chip away at my old self and make me new.

TRY THIS TODAY:

My husband’s favorite question in Lent is “Well, how is your Lent going?” That is a good question to ask ourselves as we ponder on the remainder of Lent, if my Lent has not gone well; I still have the opportunity to get back on track. Make that special effort to spend time basking in God’s love, especially in the suffering and death of Christ as he leads us to Easter. Jesus said, “Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be”. St Vincent challenged his followers to be God’s servant to the poor, to be followers of Jesus. As a Lady of Charity with that Vincentian heart, go make a difference in someone’s life so that they too may know God’s Love.