

Sunday, Mar 11, 2018

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (LAETARE SUNDAY); SECOND SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT

Be the change

Having facts on hand is not equivalent to “getting it”: that is, really perceiving the ramifications of what we know. We all suffer from a rash of too much information. What are we supposed to do about famine, stranded refugees, all the humanitarian crises of our era? What’s to be done about natural disasters, gun violence, global warming, and children neglected and abused in our own cities? Jesus comes to heal our blindness, and to bring us into the light. Once we see, we are called to do.

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41 (31). *“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”*

Monday, Mar 12, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Take Jesus at his word

What caused an anxious parent of a dying child to accept Jesus’ word as sufficient? “Your son will live” is not medicine. These four words are not magic. Yet they were enough because of the authority of the one who spoke them. Do we believe in the words of Jesus in the same way? Try living as if you do. Start with accepting that your sins are forgiven. This is the miracle of new life that Jesus promises us now and when his Kingdom comes.

TODAY’S READINGS: Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54 (244). *“The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way.”*

Tuesday, Mar 13, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Bathed in grace

Not long before Jesus heals the sick man at the pool, he encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. The stories have much in common. Neither knew who Jesus was or the power he possessed, but Jesus knew everything about them—and offers to wash away their troubles, in fact, without them having to ask or repent first. Both were afflicted and shunned for a long time, coming to the water alone with nobody to help them. Jesus goes ahead and heals them, before they have a clue. But isn’t that just like God? Giving us what no one else will give? Giving it to us before we have the sense to ask? Our job: Tell others of God’s amazing grace.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16 (245). *“Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your mat and walk?’ But the man did not know who it was.”*

Wednesday, Mar 14, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Extended hours

God worked to create the world in six days and then rested on the seventh. Thereafter, all creation was called to rest on the seventh day and to observe with God a sabbath of holiness. But the gospel reminds us that God’s work continues even after quittin’ time. Jesus therefore ignores the whistle and stays at his post, doing the work of God even as the world rests from its labors. God’s mercy and compassion know no rest. They continue as long as human weakness is in need of healing. Followers of Jesus, therefore, punch in at Baptism and stay on the job until the work is done.

TODAY’S READINGS: Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30 (246). *“Jesus*

answered them, ‘My Father is still working, and I also am working.’”

Thursday, Mar 15, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Keep the focus where it belongs

As Lent proceeds, one of the temptations that can sidetrack us is to start feeling pretty good about ourselves: I am keeping my resolution, I am praying more, I’ve asked God to forgive my sins. Soon our hands folded in prayer become fingers pointing at others: *They* gossip, *they* lie and steal, *they* are weak and sinful. We may not be that obvious, but the readings today show that the religious leaders were quick to misjudge. We can’t let the good that Lent is doing for us evaporate by failing to embrace and love others.

TODAY’S READINGS: Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47 (247). *“You search the scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them; it is they that testify on my behalf.”*

Friday, Mar 16, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Learn your origin story

Where Jesus came from was always a source of trouble. King Herod went after all the babies around Bethlehem because of the prophecy that said the next king would come from there. People later scoffed to hear that Jesus was raised in Nazareth—a town that didn’t get any respect in cosmopolitan Jerusalem. Some also complained that Jesus came from anywhere at all, because the Messiah’s origins ought to be a bit more mysterious. But no one seemed to get where Jesus was coming from in a cosmic sense: from the One who sent him. Are we as clear about our origins?

TODAY’S READINGS: Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30 (248). *“We know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”*

Saturday, Mar 17, 2018

MEMORIAL OF PATRICK, BISHOP, MISSIONARY

United we stand

Until the mid-1800s most Irish immigrants in America were middle-class Protestants, but in 1845 Ireland’s Great Potato Famine forced nearly 1 million of its poor Catholics to flee to America’s shores. Open and hostile anti-Catholicism made it difficult for the new arrivals to find work and be accepted in American society. What helped the Irish Catholics, they soon discovered, was their large population, which when organized gave them political power. There is strength in numbers whether it is in fighting prejudice or showing compassion. Get yourselves and others organized around a just cause and become a force to be reckoned with.

TODAY’S READINGS: Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53 (249). *“Never before has anyone spoken like this man.”*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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