

**Sunday, July 25, 2010**

**Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Genesis 18: 20-32; Psalm 138; Colossians 2: 12-14; Luke 11:1-13

Abraham models a reverent insistence in his begging God. “Far be it from you,” he dares to tell God, to allow any unjust destruction. On the day Abraham called, God responded; “on the day I called,” we pray in the psalm, “you answered me.” In the gospel, after teaching us how he himself prays, Jesus uses the example of a neighbor in need persistently knocking in the middle of the night. Ask, Jesus instructs; search, knock, he continues. If we know how to give good gifts to our children, he teaches in the “how much more” way the rabbis taught: “how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask...” NB: in Matthew’s gospel it is, “give every good gift.” Luke is sometimes called the evangelist of the Holy Spirit.

Some people have been taught that intercession: asking, searching, knocking, is the lowest form of prayer. Not according to Jesus. He stands before the face of God making intercession for us. Stand with him now before the face of God, and pray with him for the needs of the world, of your circle of family and friends, and then your own self. How does it feel to know he is praying with you and for you? Would you prefer the Holy Spirit or every good gift to satisfy all those needs?

Forgive us our sins for we are forgiving those who sin against us. Thank you for giving us the Spirit who fills us with such peace and joy that forgiveness is coming too!

**Monday, July 26, 2010**

**Feast of Anne and Joachim**

Sirach 44:1, 8, 10-15; Psalm 132; Matthew 13: 16-17

Today we celebrate grandparents, ancestors, the elderly. We are offered a chance to contemplate the foremothers and forefathers of Jesus, the Word made flesh. There is no basis in scripture to name them, but the Sirach reading praises ancestors in a culture and religion that still had not come to believe in life after death. The psalm highlights David as the ancestor of Jesus, although Matthew’s gospel traces the Davidic line to Joseph. Jesus addresses us in the gospel: “Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.”

Many jumping off points for prayer! Shall you trace all those whose lives have brought you to this life now? Shall you remember all your ancestors in the faith, the saints who have guided you with their wisdom? If you are a grandparent, “be” Jesus’ grandparent and play with him during your prayer time. Thank God for your eyes and ears, their strengths and if you can, even their limits. What will you see and hear today? Look for, listen for God in all things.

Thank you for our grandparents, and for all the elderly who people our lives. We especially beg your comfort for all those elders who are alone, sick, in refugee camps...

## **Tuesday, July 27, 2010**

Jeremiah 14: 17-22; Psalm 79; Matthew 13: 36-43

It seems that in the first part of our Jeremiah reading that God is speaking, weeping over the destruction of God's people. Then we speak, with Jeremiah: "Have you struck us down?...we look for peace...for a time of healing...we set all our hope on you." How much God must love the humility in this line from the psalm: "Let your compassion come speedily to meet us for we are brought very low." Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and weeds, comparing the wheat to the children of the kingdom and the weeds as the evil ones. When the harvest comes and the two are separated, "the just shall shine like the sun in the kingdom..."

Are you just? Ask for that gift, to discern what is just and what makes God weep. Where are God's tears falling today? For what are you looking? Peace, healing – what? For the world and for yourself? Tell God your great desires.

Let your compassion come speedily, for we are brought very low. Deepen our trust in you and our hope for world peace. Heal us, holy healer, that we may be truly kin.

## **Wednesday, July 28, 2010**

Jeremiah 15: 10, 16-21; Psalm 59; Matthew 13: 44-46

Poor Jeremiah is on an emotional rollercoaster, and all because of his relationship with his Lord. From joy to pain, and an indictment of God's own fickleness: "Truly you are to me like a deceitful brook, whose waters fail." God hears and comforts Jeremiah, provided he utters "what is precious and not what is worthless." The gospel is about selling all to purchase something deemed more valuable. "With great joy," the one who finds a treasure in the field buys the whole field. Might some of it be worthless?

Examine your life or just your week. What is valuable and what worthless? What do you usually speak—precious, encouraging, truthful words or some worthless gossip, some self-promoting, complaining words? How comfortable are you with silence? What if we only spoke what we know to be true? What silence! Discuss this with Jesus.

Bless, Jesus, the words of our mouth and our hearts. Let truth set us free and deepen our love and union with one another. Help us discern, especially the news media.

## **Thursday, July 29, 2010**

### **Martha of Bethany, friend of Jesus**

Jeremiah 18:1-6; Psalm 146; Luke 10:38-42

Jeremiah watches the potter make, and then re-make a vessel. God reminds us that we are clay. God can form and re-form us. Martha, already with many tasks, invites Jesus, but then insists on her sister's helping her. In today's culture, she might have tied

an apron on Jesus! “Martha, Martha.” The double use of her name shows Jesus’ affection for her. Then, as one child interpreted his words: “Don’t be so fussy!”

List your tasks. Why are you so involved? Why do you serve? Is there time to attend to Jesus? Join the threesome (and probably a slew of disciples too) in that house. Listen. What is Jesus saying to Mary? Hear him call your name twice, with deep affection. What is he saying to you? What does he say to Martha when she finally joins him? The inviter becomes the invitee!

Jesus, forgive us our fussiness. Thank you for calling all of us: “Take, all of you, and eat.” Forgive our hierarchy their discriminations and remind all of us that we need reform, a church “semper reformanda.”

### **Friday, July 30, 2010**

Jeremiah 26: 1-9; Psalm 69; Matthew 13: 54-58

Prophets comfort or confront the people and the powerful. Today we hear the Lord’s promise of disaster unless the people listen to Jeremiah. “Then the priests and prophets and all the people laid hold of him.” The gospel corresponds: the people of Nazareth took offense at Jesus, disdain him as “the carpenter’s son.” Jesus’ response remains a prophetic consolation to our day: “Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and their own house.”

In 1989 the US leaders of women and men religious met together to decide what their desired future would look like in 2010. Above all, religious would be noted for their contemplative and prophetic stance. They would challenge unjust structures in church and in society. It is 2010. We have well protested injustice in the “country”, but “in our own house,” the church? Many stand for a more inclusive church, for health care (while abhorring abortion) for the poor, for ... You fill in the blanks. Lay or vowed religious, because of your baptism, you share Jesus’ prophetic mission. Pray for courage, and for willingness to welcome the prophet.

Give us the gift of discernment, Holy Spirit, so that we may make wise decisions and take wise actions on behalf of justice. Thank you for Jesus’ mission.

### **Saturday, July 31, 2010**

### **Ignatius of Loyola**

Jeremiah 26: 11-16; 24; Psalm 69; Matthew 14: 1-12

Again there is such connection between the two readings. The sentence of death meted out to Jeremiah is challenged and changed by the people, standing over against the priests and prophets. The death sentence is carried out on John the Baptist for his speaking out against Herod’s adultery. One of principles Ignatius works with in his Spiritual Exercises is the need to be interiorly free in making decisions. Jeremiah says to his captors: “I am in your hands. Do with me...” Whether he is killed or set free, he is

already free because he speaks the word of God in truth. The Alleluia verse sums up: “Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice’s sake.”

So many Jesuit martyrs. So many of the laity martyred through the centuries and all over the world. In Greek, *martyres* means witness. Examine your witness to the word of God. How do you witness? How far would you go and for what cause? When have you suffered persecution? Is it Thoreau or Robert Kennedy who says: If we haven’t found something we are willing to die for, we are not fit to live. Discuss that with Jesus.

Again, we ask for courage, for interior freedom, for holding our life lightly and committing it to your hands. We trust you to make justice roll like a river!