

## **Monday, March 1, 2010**

Daniel 9: 3-10; Psalm 79; Luke 6:36-38

Last week I broke my own resolution for Lent. I will focus on only a part of one reading, encouraging you to read the whole passage slowly and preferably aloud. So I begin again, and so can you with what you hope to offer God this season.

Jesus exhorts: “Be merciful as your Father is merciful. Do not judge.” Notice, it is not “Be you perfect” as in Matthew. Luke’s whole gospel depicts God’s mercy and kindness, God’s preference for the poor and outcast. God’s love, portrayed by Luke but embodied by Jesus, is unconditional.

What if you gave up perfection for Lent? What would that look like in your life? Something as simple as leaving your bed unmade or as painful to the ego as missing a deadline or a date? Pray for the gift of non-judgmental acceptance of yourself as well as others. Pray for the gift of mercy as your God shows mercy, and to love as Jesus loves.

Jesus, merciful and humble of heart, take our hearts and make them yours. Give us new hearts of flesh that we might hear the cry of the poor and in some way respond.

## **Tuesday, March 2, 2010**

Isaiah 1: 10, 16-20, 27-28, 31; Psalm 50; Matthew 23: 1-12

Some of you complain when our liturgists pick and choose the verses from a long text like the opening chapter of Isaiah. So reach for your Bible and read the whole, including the verses missing above. We focus on: “Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”

Where in the news of today do you see justice at work? Where are there structures of justice in our first world society? Give thanks. Who needs rescuing, surely in Haiti, but in your own circle? Who needs your helping hand, listening ear today? Who is the orphan in your midst, the lonely, the neglected, the one cast out even by our church leaders? Will you who are the church reach out? Who is the widow, grief stricken, and from the Hebrew, voiceless? How will you respond to her or to him?

Keep us alert to our far neighbors who are oppressed, widowed and orphaned, but help us respond to the needy ones right in our family, our circle of relationships. Thank you.

## **Wednesday, March 3, 2010**

Jeremiah 18: 18-20; Psalm 31; Matthew 20: 17-28

Jeremiah prays, much in the style of Jesus. He prays for his enemies: “Pay attention to me, Lord. Listen to what my adversaries say....They have dug a pit for my life. Remember how I stood before you to speak good for them, to turn away your wrath from them.”

Repeat Jeremiah’s prayer. Then return and name your “adversaries.” Start with any who frighten you, ie terrorists. Those who irritate you, anger you, enrage you (at home, at work, overseas). Any whom you hate. Of whom you are jealous/envious. Will you speak good for them to God? Try it. And if you fail, remember you need not be perfect. Let us pray with Jesus, who was not ready to forgive such massive injustice done to him, but at least could pray:

Father, forgive them. They (he/she) do not know what they are doing. Forgive those with malice in their hearts and forgive those who, like us, are weak and needy.

### **Thursday, March 4, 2010**

Jeremiah 17: 5-10; Psalm 1; Luke 16: 19-31

“Jesus told this parable to those among the Pharisees who loved money: ‘There was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day. At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table...’”

Examine your attitude toward and behavior regarding money, clothing, food. If you won the lottery, on what would you spend the millions? Discuss your luxuries and your hungers with Jesus. Listen. He is merciful, but he challenges. What will he say to you, call you to? Ask for the courage to respond.

Keep us alert to the poor lying at our door. Give us the gift of generosity, giving without counting the cost. Free us from all our various greeds, Savior of the world!

### **Friday, March 5, 2010**

Genesis 37: 3-4, 12-13, 17-28; Psalm 105; Matthew 21: 33-43, 45-46

“Pit” is an operative word this week. Jesus was put in a pit, a deep hole just the size of a man, according to the tour guide in Israel who pointed out Jesus’ possible prison. Joseph is pulled from the pit by his brothers to be sold (greed again) as a slave. In the gospel, the son of the vineyard owner is killed by the tenants. “They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

Today pray for those who traffic human beings for work or for sex. Pray for parents who sell their children so “they might have a better life.” Pray for those who throw homosexuals, those who have divorced and remarried, those who choose abortion

out of God's vineyard. Pray that our church leaders and our own selves learn to stop judging. Who knows a person's conscience? We are only tenants. Check out any prejudices lurking in your heart and offer them to Jesus for transforming.

We are only tenants. Thank you for calling us to work in your vineyard, God of all peoples. Forgive us our greedy grasping of the fruits, and our tendency to exclude.

**Saturday, March 6, 2010**

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Psalm 103; Luke 5: 1-3, 11-32

We all could probably re-tell the story of the Prodigal Son and most of us have heard that it is really the father who is prodigal, meaning extravagant, welcoming the son who has wasted everything "on dissolute living." So let us focus on the elder son to whom the father says: "My child, you are always with me and all that I have is yours."

Hear God speak directly to you: "My child, you are always with me. All that I have is yours." And again: "All that I have is yours." How will you respond to such extravagant love, such abundant generosity?

Take, Lord, receive all that I am and have. You have given all to me. To you I return it. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.