



Daily Meditations

April 6-11, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

HOLY WEEK

It's the day after Hosanna Palms

Monday, April 6, 2020

Mark 11:12-25

Collect, Monday in Holy Week: Almighty God, whose dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

On entering the Temple, Jesus started throwing out everyone who had set up shop there-- those buying and selling. He kicked over the tables of the bankers and the stalls of the pigeon merchants...and the He taught them. - The Message Bible

The stage is being set now for the ultimate confrontation. The Temple Elite are beside themselves with anger. Jesus is undoing their power structure, and now He's attacked their wallets saying that the Temple has become a "hangout from thieves."

Some of these verses from Mark have been used to avoid giving, to avoid a pledge, to avoid any kind of fund drive.

It's a tough tightrope to walk--even now--churches and money. It is a conflict in me that I wrestle with from time to time. Why do I "give" to my church? How shall I respond to a funding solicitation from my church?

For me, it comes down to "why do I go to my church?" There are several answers--both good and bad ones. I think I go for community--some of the most meaningful folks in my little world. I go because I need to be reminded of what's "really" important. I go because, in the week that follows, I might just be a better human being for having gone on Sunday. I need a place to go where there are loving friends and great teachings. That's worth something to me.

I'm not saying that I agree with raffles at the front door, but I'll likely get over that. Thank you, Jesus. TYJ.

Paul's Got Some Problems on His Hands with the Church in Corinth

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

2 Corinthians 1:8-22

Collect, Tuesday in Holy Week: *O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Whatever God has promised gets stamped with the YES of Jesus. - The Message

I am often left searching around for a passage to write about from the Psalms, the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the Gospel appointed for the day. I read different translations of the Bible, and I sometimes struggle to find a verse that speaks to me. Today, I found a quote above--"stamped with the YES of Jesus."

It's what I'm looking for daily. WWJD? What do you think, Jesus? Should I? Can I? What if I...? I'm not saying that I always listen to the answers to my questions. I'm not even saying that I always ask the questions when I need to do so. I will say this: I usually can anticipate the answers correctly before I receive them--whether I abide by those answers or not. TYJ

The Caretakers of the Vineyard

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Mark 12:1-11

Collect, Wednesday in Holy Week: *Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

"Surely, they will respect my son." - The Message

So, who are the players in this story? I believe that the vineyard is the Temple, but by definition, the Temple is the people, not the building. Not long ago, I read about a sign (posted by the priest) over the exit doors of a parish sanctuary. It read: "The Church has left the building." And, not only is the Temple not the building, it's not the Temple Elite either.

So, who are the greedy tenants--the farmhands who stole the fruits of the vineyard by redefining its ownership? That would be the Temple Elite.

Jesus is cooking His own goose here and foretelling His future simultaneously.

So, what am I to make of this story today? I cannot concentrate on the vineyard owner. That's too big a step for me. As I think I have written once before, I will cast myself as one of the branches of one of the vines. I'll just be

trying to make a good crop of grapes for the Son to come and collect --
"stamped with the YES of Jesus." TYJ

On the Significance of the Bread and the Cup at the Eucharist

Thursday, April 9, 2020

1 Corinthians 10:14-17; 11:27-32

Collect, Maundy Thursday: *Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

"So, my very dear friends, when you see people reducing God to something they can use or control, get out of their company as fast as you can...Because there is one loaf, our mayness becomes oneness--we become unified in Him." - The Message

In 2016, my daughter died of a very wicked cancer just before her 39th birthday. I was shattered. A very wise and loving priest told me that she was not so truly gone as I thought. He told me that I could meet her at the altar rail in the Eucharist anytime I wanted to do so. I'll never forget those words. I'll meet her there every time. We are one body. TYJ

Really, Pete? I don't think so.

Friday, April 10, 2020

John 13:36-38

Collect, Good Friday: *Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

"Master," said Peter..."I'll lay down my life for you." Jesus said..."The truth is that before the rooster crows, you'll deny Me three times." - The Message

Don't you just love old Pete in this story? I do. Here's the guy who is one of the chosen ones. Here's the rock. But, guess what? Pete's human.

Simon Peter is not bad. Simon Peter is real. Simon Peter is you, and he's me.

What are we to take from all of this? Well, I don't believe that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Pete failed. I fail--every day. But, I usually know it when I fail. And the good news from Jesus is that I get to try again. It is my responsibility to try again.

As I write this, we are still in the early stages of Lent. I have missed opportunities daily to fulfill some of the promises that I made. I resolve to try again. TYJ

The Burial of Jesus by Those Emboldened Ones

Saturday, April 11, 2020

John 19:38-42

Collect, Holy Saturday: *O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on his holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

After all this, Joseph of Arimathea (he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he was afraid of the Jews) petitioned Pilate to take the body of Jesus...Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus by night, came now in broad daylight...Together, they took Jesus' body. - The Message

Here is the story of a couple more very human characters. Both men were believers, but afraid to own up to it. They feared what others would think. They feared for their status. Perhaps they even feared for their lives.

Joseph was a man of wealth and status. Some texts say that he was the uncle of Mary, Jesus' mother. Nicodemus was a member of the Temple Elite--a Pharisee. Neither risked public knowledge of their beliefs while Jesus was alive. Both risked everything to give Jesus a proper burial.

With less at risk than Pete, or Joseph, or Nick, all of us have denied Jesus at some point, in some way. What does Fr. Phil say? It's about our future, not our past mistakes. TYJ

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