

5th Sunday of Lent, year B

Biblical Reflections on the Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34. Psalm 50. Hebrews 5:7-9. John 12:20-30.

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We all look forward to good things happening in our future. It might be a family gathering, where we have not seen many of our relatives since the last Funeral or Wedding. It might be the prospect of moving into a new House after waiting a long time to get the where-with-all to at least have it to pay it off as time moves on. It might be a long-awaited operation, which will give more length to our life, and thus appreciate it more, because of our fragility.

In the First reading from the Prophet Jeremiah today, he proclaims God's Word, and it is full of optimism for a new deed that the Lord God will initiate with His people in the future. This reading is just so powerful, its ramifications for the listeners who really open their ears to the possibilities that the Lord God has for them and us, would nearly blow their mind! Even more so than winning Lotto or some mega Lottery.

When God's people were at a low ebb in their living out of their covenant love; when their present and future seemed to be nothing but a mess and it was as though they had lost their way, as their ancestors did in the Desert many years before; the Lord God comes up with a plan, as always.....a plan that would streamline their ability to truly listen to God, respond to God and hence live life to the fullest.

As Jeremiah says, in speaking the Word of the Lord,

'Deep within them I will write my law in their hearts.' You can't get much closer to the action than that!

Then to top it off, the **Lord God says**,

'I will forgive their iniquity and never call to mind their sin.'

Now, that is a guarantee to stake one's life on.

Now for us, and as it was for our ancestors in faith, a great deal like this does not come without a personal cost; that price being a contrite heart! A clean heart! A remembering heart! A heart that truly listens and has the inner energy and grace to respond! The Responsorial Psalm today is one of the greatest Acts of Contrition in the Scriptures. Psalm 50. The Twitter message that could do well by being embedded in our being is: CREATE A CLEAN HEART IN ME, O GOD.

The Second Reading today, takes up the theme of inner transformation and the subtle growth that can take place in a person who lives the above Twitter message!

In the Letter to the Hebrews, the Author unpicks vital aspects of Our Lord's inner spirituality, in order to facilitate our own innermost conversion.

In the Letter it says,

'he learnt to obey through suffering.'

Unless we get a good handle on this, we could end up moving away from its real intent! The operative Verb is TO OBEY! Most certainly here we are not talking about obedience like we use with our pet Dog, STAY! COME! Nor is it an obedience that we would use with our growing children, 'Don't do that!' No, the Biblical concept is through suffering, Jesus learnt to LISTEN not just with his ears, but with his whole body! We see this happening, and you would have seen this with members of your own family. Sickness and suffering not only enables the person in question to know what is really of value, and who are of value, but it can have a catalytic effect upon the family! Sickness and suffering in the family can unearth some of the most sanctifying and saintly aspects, actions, and values of our humanity from those around us. Worth thinking about!

So, let's get real; Jesus entered completely into suffering which then enabled him to listen to His Father's filial words, and thus he can fully identify with us on the ground floor.

The Gospel today has underlying threads which have come through to us through the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Second Reading. Let's check it out!

There are lots of fantastic and realistic prayers in the Scriptures. In the Gospel today, we have a real beauty! Some Greeks, said to Philip, 'we would like to see Jesus.' What a deep prayer.....the Great St. Benedict, the Founder of Western Monasticism once said to his brothers....'Prayer ought to be brief and pure.' In other words, it is not a show of lofty words that will win the Lord's attention....no, it is the simplicity and uncomplicated nature of the prayer which comes from a contrite heart.

There is more to this..... Philip becomes an intercessor for the Gentiles (Greeks) who go to Jesus! Look in our life at the many times when we want to see Jesus! Nine times out of ten, the Jesus that we are looking for is right in front of us, and we can't see for looking! Or many people that we meet over Coffee or in the Shops, will in a roundabout way ask us to lead them to Jesus! There is plenty of things to consider here as we head into the last lap of Lent, as we continue our spiritual athletics.

In the Gospel for today Jesus replied to the Greeks, in real terms, he did not sugar coat the message. In short, Our Lord says, that to live the fullness of life, we must die to all that is not of God. To find life, we must lose it.....in other words, to find real life is being that of a foot washer!

Examine of Conscience time:

St. Paul's Hymn to Charity or the Hymn to Love - 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a symbol clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, it will do me no good whatever. THE WORD OF THE LORD. THANKS BE TO GOD.



In the next section of this Reading, substitute LOVE for your own name N__.

*This will help you in your response to
Come back to the Lord with all your heart.*

*It is a short examination of conscience,
and will help you discover the areas in your life, which need God's healing forgiveness.*

N__(Love) is always patient and kind;

N__(Love) is never jealous;

N__(Love) is never boastful or conceited;

N__(Love) is never rude or selfish;

N__(Love) does not take offence, and is not resentful.

N__(Love) takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth;

N__(Love) is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end. ❤️