

Saturday, April 3

Psalm 95, 88; Psalm 27, Lam 3:37–58,
Heb 4:1–16; Rom 8:1–11, .

Hebrew 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

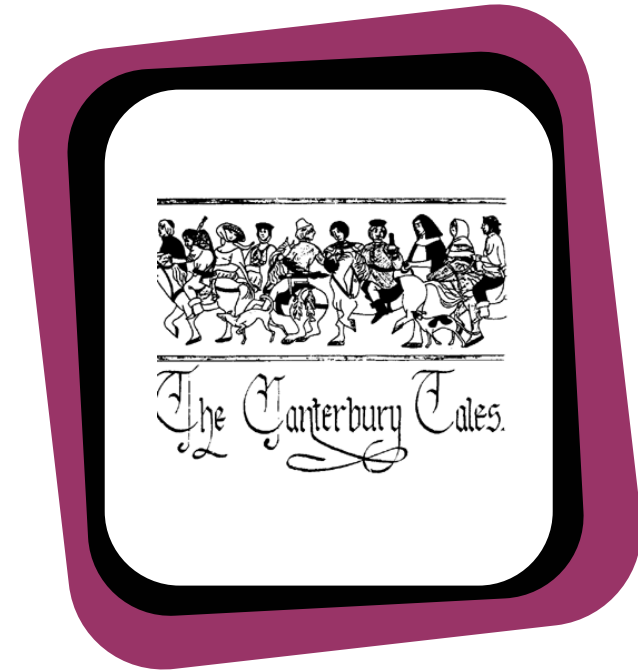
The afternoon of Holy Saturday is a traditional time of baptizing souls won to Christ during Lent. For it is on this day, the day of Christ's descending to the dead, that we know we will find life and light tomorrow.

For as it says at the beginning of John:

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Libbi Crowe

Lent 2010 Meditations



*By the parishioners of S . Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church
7810 Navarre Parkway
Navarre, FL 32566*

Lent 2010

In the Morning

From Psalm 51

*Open my lips, O Lord, **

and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, **

and renew a right spirit within me.

*Cast me not away from your presence **

and take not your holy Spirit from me.

*Give me the joy of your saving help again **

and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.

Amen.

A Reading

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

A period of silence may follow.

*A hymn or canticle may be used; the Apostles' Creed may be
said.*

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have
brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your
mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be
overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the
fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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Friday, April 2; GOOD FRIDAY

**Psalm 95, 22 Psalm 40, 54 Lam 3:1-9 & 19-33, 1
Peter 1:19 & 38-42**

**Psalm 95" Let us come into his presence with
thanksgiving..."**

We at St Augustines' have a lot for which to be thankful. Not
only are we blessed with a new priest among us and a
fabulous Vestry but our biggest blessing is the worship,
fellowship & ministry in Christ's Name which occurs within our
parish family. In my prayers every night I thank God our
Creator that I was led to worship, fellowship & serve God here
among you, my parish family.

Today, as we meditate on Our Lord's death, let us remember
that He died so that each of us may gain access to God. In the
spirit of thanksgiving for what Christ did for us on that hill so
long ago, let us show our gratitude by seeking out ways in
which to share the love that is an integral part of our parish life
with others who might not know of Christ's sacrificial love for
us.

Amen.

~Sarah Beth McCarren

Thursday, April 1: (Maun. Thur.)

**Psalm 102, Psalm 142, 143; Lam 2:10–18;
1 Cor 10: 14–17; 11: 27–32; Mark 14: 12–25**

Mark 14: 12–25

The acceptance by Jesus of the betrayal by one of his own, AND the institution of the Holy Eucharist! What two diverse happenings occurring at the same time. Jesus tells his disciples where to find an appropriate place for the Passover meal. During this “last supper,” Jesus announces that one of them will betray him! What a shocker! Can’t you just hear everyone saying, “No, not me! Certainly not me? Is it me?” And Judas - what does he feel after this announcement? Everyone denying culpability, does he also deny it? How does he react when Jesus tells the twelve that “it would have been better for that one not to have been born?” Is Judas’ conscious already bothering him?

Now Jesus begins the ritual that will become the foundation of our Christian worship – the turning of bread and wine into his body and blood. How can Judas participate in this momentous ritual, fully knowing what will happen in a matter of hours? Does he have trouble swallowing the food and the wine? Does he only appear to eat and drink as the others do?

We’ll never know. But we do know that even though Jesus is to be betrayed, he does not hesitate to leave the world with the momentous ritual of our Christian faith – the Eucharist. The foundation of all our belief: the miracle of bread and wine becoming the body and blood of our Savior. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Anonymous**Wednesday, February 17**

**Psalm 95, 32, 143; Psalm 102, 130, Amos 5:6–15,
Heb 12:1–14, Luke 18:9–14**

“God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

In this statement by the tax collector, the verb used here means “to be propitiated”, according to the notes in my study Bible. I looked up the word “propitiate” in my old Webster’s New World Dictionary and found that “propitiate” means “to cause to become favorably inclined; win or gain the good will of; appease or conciliate.” I’ve heard the word used in the form of Christ dying on the cross for us in propitiation of our sins, so I’ve understood the appeasement aspect of propitiation. What I’m not clear on, is how it applies to “mercy.”

In this passage, the tax collector, a not- so- well- thought- of guy, doesn’t plead his good works like the Pharisee does, who self- righteously prays in thanksgiving to God that he is not like other evildoers, but one who tries to keep God’s laws. The tax collector, rather, pleads that God be favorably inclined to forgiving his sin (have mercy). Jesus proclaims that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, is justified before God. Why? The tax collector’s sins were forgiven and he was “credited with righteousness—not his own but that which comes from God.” (again from the scholars notes of my study Bible)

Self righteousness, like that of the Pharisee, is shallow and not from God. In some ways, it is worse than those sins of “evildoers”, because it elevates the self up to a higher level than God and does not come from belief in Christ’s propitiation of our sins. Only in recognizing God’s omnipotence and power can we humble ourselves, and only in humbling ourselves; that is, understanding what our sins are and what God’s mercy is, will we be exalted.

During Lent, we make extra effort to seek God’s mercy. There is a section in our Hymnal called Christian Life (Hymn #635-#709). These hymns are humble pleas for God’s mercy and

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help to understand his word and keep our faith. Read the words of one or a few of these hymns as you wait for the Sunday service to start or during communion. There are too many inspiring hymns to duplicate the words to here, but I'll include one short one. Please, please, don't miss out on the others!

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly,
follow thee more nearly, day by day.

Donna Howard

Thursday, February 18

**Psalm 37:1–18; Psalm 37:19–42, Hab 3:1–18,
Phil 3:12–21, John 17:1–8**

John 17:1–8

This passage of John is the grand finale of Jesus' preceding homily. Since the 16th century, this chapter has been called the "high priestly prayer" of Jesus. Many phrases here echo the Lord's Prayer. He speaks as intercessor, with words addressed directly to the Father and not to the disciples, who it seems only overhear. Notice also the time warps: the prayer is one of petition, for the disciples who are with him at the moment and for those to come (us!). Although still in the world, Jesus looks on his earthly ministry as a thing of the past. Whereas Jesus, up to this time, said that the disciples could follow him, now he sees them with him in union with the Father. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be.

Libbi Crowe

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- He went with his cousin Barnabas and Paul on their first mission trip.
- It is thought that this was the first gospel to be written and it shows us Jesus through Peter's eyes.

This passage is the parable of the murders in the vineyard, Jesus is speaking to the Jewish people telling them God is the owner of the vineyard and the Jewish people the tenants who took care of the vineyard. These tenants reject God's servants when they come to collect the fruit, and kill the son of the owner, when he comes to collect what rightfully belongs to him. With this parable Jesus is predicting His rejection and death by the Jews and thus the rejection of God's kingdom by the Jews, and the opening of the kingdom to the Gentiles. Verse 9 tells us what the owner of the vineyard will do when he learns of His Son's death "He will come and destroy the tenants, and give the vineyard to others."

We are the others who have the opportunity to receive the vineyard.

Dear Lord, we pray for those who have not had to the opportunity to receive the vineyard, and for those who have rejected the opportunity, that they may come to know you in all your glory. We thank you that we have been among the lucky ones who hear your word and know of your love for us. Amen

Sally Strickling

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Tuesday, March 30

Psalm 6, 12; Psalm 94, Lam 1:17–22, 2 Cor 1:8–22, Mark 11:27–33

Mark 11:27–33

I find it interesting that the chief priests, and elders were more worried about what the people thought of them than their own belief in what God would send. It makes me wonder what's holding their belief's back when so many witnessed his miracles? It reminds me of our own society today; strong believers, those who doubt, and everyone else in between. Where did these men fall on the scale? What makes so many believe, yet so many ignore God's presence in their lives? What are their stories, their reasons?

Reading this story makes me think about how God appears to me. I know he looks different to me than he does to others, which may be the reason why the elders and chief priests questioned Jesus.

Heather Ruppel

Wednesday March 31

Psalm 55; Psalm 74, Lam 2:1–9, 2 Cor 1:23–2:11, Mark 12:1–11

Mark 12: 1–11

A few facts about the author of the Gospel according to Mark:

- He is John Mark who is mentioned in the book of Acts.
- He was a follower of Simon Peter and was with Peter in Rome.

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Friday February 19, 2010

Psalm 95, 31; Psalm 35, Eze 18:1–4, 25–32, Phil 4:1–9, John 17:9–19

Philippians 4: 1–9

My heart cries out to You.
I fall into waiting arms.
Soft words speak to my pain.
Peace floods my soul.
Thanksgivings fall from my lips.
I am anxious for nothing
for my Lord is near.

Janice Burns

Saturday February 20

Psalm 30, 32; Psalm 42, 43, Eze 39:21–29, Phil 4:10–20, John 17:20–26

John 17:20–26

Jesus prays for his disciples and for all of His followers. These verses tell us that we, as Christians, are one with the the Disciples, one with Jesus and one with God the Father. He further tells us that God's love for Him is shared with us all, and that He will be with us all.

Never does he tell us to fear God, only to love Him as He loves us.

Brian Lowman

Lent 2010

Sunday 1; February 21

Psalm 63, 98; Psalm 103, Dan 9:3–10, Heb 2:10–18, John 12:44–50

**Psalm 103:10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities**

Not only us, but everyone else, too. I notice a sad tendency in all of us to want mercy for ourselves and justice for the other guy. But God's way is mercy, for all of us. Even the people we don't like.

Maybe *especially* those we don't like!

Libbi Crowe

Monday, February 22

Psalm 41, 52; Psalm 44, Gen 37:1–11, 1 Cor 1:1–19, Mark 1:1–13

Monday 22 Feb 2010

Trusting God Our King

God is, was & always will be God. Our God has been with humanity from the very beginning & God always provides. In these tough economic times, trust is paramount. But, like the God Who delivered Israel from captivity & saw her through the wilderness, this same God is working to deliver we 21st-century people of faith. There is a song I sang in a chorus concert when I was a student at the University of West Florida; it is an African-American spiritual whose words I sing to myself as a prayer.

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Our charge, during this Lenten season and all the time, for that matter, is not so much to give up certain behaviors or specific "sinful" ways, but to "lay hold on life" and see that "Christ is all and all" in it. This, then, shall be our joy

Donna Howard

Monday, March 29

**Psalm 51; Psalm 69:1–23, Lam 1:1–12,
2 Cor 1:1–7, Mark 11:12–25**

Psalm 51

In this Psalm verses 10-12 are the most meaningful to me. I use these verses as a prayer routine. When I feel frustrated, impatient, and not at my best I ask the Lord to restore me. I pray to be brought into a state of mind and heart that calms me so I can do good works and do them with a joyful heart.

Vs 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me

Vs 11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me

Vs 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit

I now pray these verses as I spend the Lenten season preparing for the great celebration. I need to be in the right spirit to get the full benefit of the most wonderful and beautiful love story ever told.

Finding and living in the peace that passes all understanding,

Pamela K. Apps

Sunday March 28

Psalm 24, 29; Psalm 103, Zech 9:9–12; Zech 12:9–13:9, 1 Tim 6:12–16, Luke 19:41–48

1 Tim 6:12–16

The Apostle Paul's charge to Timothy, his friend and fellow evangelist, to: "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession."

What he meant was for Timothy, and for all of us who believe and are "saved", to claim the benefits of eternal life in greater fullness. "Fight the good fight" means to continually seek to obey the will of God and resolve to keep from turning away from God's offer of grace. It means to seek God, trust God, obey God, let him be our guide, and to rejoice in the eternal life he offers us.

Hymn # 552 in "The Hymnal 1982" says it better than I ever could:

*Fight the good fight with all thy might, Christ is thy strength
and Christ thy right;/ lay hold on life, and it shall be thy joy
and crown eternally.*

*Run the straight race through God's good grace, lift up
thine eyes and seek his face;/ life with its way before us lies,
Christ is the path and Christ the prize.*

*Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide; his boundless mercy will
provide; trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove Christ is its
life and Christ its love.*

*Faint not nor fear, his arms are near: he changeth not, and
thou art dear;/only believe, and thou shalt see that Christ is
all in all to thee.*

"Thank you God/for hearing every prayer/Thank you God, for just being there/ thank you God, thank you God/ For I am not worthy of your love."

Amen and Amen.

Sarah Beth McCarren

Tuesday, February 23

Psalms: am: 50, 59, 60; pm: 19, 46; Gen. 39: 1–23; I Cor. 2: 14–3:15; Mark 2: 1–12

Mark 1:14–28, 1 Cor 1:20–31

On this day, the selections describe the common people who were chosen as disciples of Christ. Fisherman and others from impoverished backgrounds were selected, demonstrating that a lack of ties to worldly possessions is an advantage in entering God's kingdom. I can't help but wonder about the pain felt by those who were left behind and whether they understood the decision of their loved ones to follow Christ. For example, the parents of Andrew and Simon:

Our sons are fisherman, we live by the sea,
They cast their nets for my wife and me.

Now they're under the spell of a Nazarene,
Beyond the hills, no more to be seen.

Our arms are old and our legs are tired,
On the coldest nights, they'd stoke the fire.

Now what will become of their mother and me,
Will we beg in the streets, while they run free?

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She worries all day, restless at night,
Andrew and Simon are nowhere in sight.

Insolent children, rebellious youth,
They've left us behind in search of truth.

Our children were fisherman, and may still be,
Casting their nets for the Nazarene.

Oh how I wish that it could be me,
Caught in the web of the Nazarene.

Tony Thompson

Wednesday, February 24

**Psalm 119:49–72; Psalm 49, 53 , Gen 37:25–36,
1 Cor 2:1–13, Mark 1:29–45**

Gen 37:25–36

In keeping God's laws we sometimes forget that greed and cruelty are just as evil as the more definite laws are.

Joseph's brothers were evil when they took this child of Jacob's old age. Jacob had time now that he was old, to enjoy a little boy. When his other sons were little he was too busy to listen to their stories and take part in their little boy activities.

The brothers were greedy and didn't want their father to love this child. They were cruel to cause their father such terrible grief, thinking his son, whom he adored, was dead.

The brothers loved their father, but didn't want to share him with Joseph. Jacob loved all his sons, but they couldn't see that.

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listen to the word of the Lord will suffer greater consequences than those who take the leap of faith and invest our trust in Jesus Christ.

Jessica Thompson

Saturday, March 27

**Psalm 137, 144; Psalm 42, 43, Exod 10:21–11:8,
2 Cor 4:13–18, Mark 10:46–52**

Mark 10:46–52

These past few months at The Citadel have been a very trying year. As the days continue this place continues to slowly wear you down until everyone around you has had enough. People often tell me “I don't know how you do it” or “Why do you put up with all that nonsense?” I simply reply, “It is just something you do, you just keep going.”

Why I keep going is something I am never asked. But the answer is simple. I am guided by faith. I wake up every day and say, “Alright Lord, let us do this together.” Anything is possible when you believe; anything can be done when you see your life not through your own eyes but through the God. Lead yourself by faith and not by sight.

Andrew L. Phillips

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standards. But in God's economy, having these attributes adds nothing to their value. Hence those who are humble will be first in the Kingdom of God. Hey, maybe the Kingdom of God is already here for those who are humble!

Richard Kyle Smith

Friday, March 26

Psalm 22; Psalm 141, 143 , Exod 9:13–35, 2 Cor 4:1–12, Mark 10:32–45

Exod 9:13–35

The very first thing that came to mind when I read this passage was ... school. I know that this sounds far from Biblical, but ironically, in a peculiar sense, a school scenario is very much similar to this particular passage. While reading this passage, surprisingly, I pictured God as the principal.

The "principal" is threatening to punish the student (Pharaoh) with detention for his terrible actions. In the Exodus scenario, the punishment was a dreadful hailstorm over all of Egypt except in the land of Goshen where the Israelites were living. Some of the Pharaoh's "friends," or followers, chose to listen to Moses and sheltered all of their slaves and livestock.

On the other hand, some chose to disregard the statement and let their slaves and cattle stay in the fields. The consequence for *these* actions was death to all living things in the fields. So, in a strange sense, this passage relates somewhat to school. An angry principal is threatening a misbehaving student and friends with severe consequences for their actions.

The typical outcome with the Bible and the school environment is that some will listen and some unfortunately won't. As I read through this passage, one of the most important lessons that I learned, and will always keep in mind, is that those who do not

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Lent 2010

Greed and cruelty change us from being true Christians. God wants us to love one another. Let us remember that this Lenten season, and also the rest of the year.

Anna Mae Nelson

Faith Lutheran Church
Sault Ste Marie, Michigan

Thursday, February 25

Psalm 50, 59, 60; Psalm 19, 46, Gen 39:1–23, 1 Cor 2:14–3:15, Mark 2:1–12

Genesis 39: 1–23 - wonderful story of faith and trust

After Potiphar took Joseph into Egypt, God blessed Joseph and his master. Joseph prospered and became the overseer of his master's house. The Lord blessed Joseph and helped him succeed. The Lord also blessed his master's house because of Joseph. Things were as good as they good be; the Lord was there helping Joseph be successful.

When life is good it makes an easy time for us to believe in God's blessing, favor, and concern for us. It's easy to see that the Lord is present and grace truly abounds.

But things begin to rapidly change for Joseph, and he is imprisoned unjustly, his whole circumstances change. Now he is in a dungeon, imprisoned, with all the horrible things this entails.

Now it could seem the Lord is completely absent from the events in Joseph's life; it could seem that He is aloof and not interested in his problems.

But wait, the Lord was still with Joseph, showing His steadfast love. The chief jailer begins to look with favor on Joseph, and soon Joseph was in charge of the care of all the prisoners.

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Joseph again succeeds, not just through his hard work, but because the Lord continued to bless him and looked after him.

The story of Joseph's successes through the Lord's favor continues in Chapter 40.

Mary Ann Pacana

Friday February 26

**Psalm 40, 54; Psalm 51 , Gen 40:1–23,
1 Cor 3:16–23, Mark 2:13–22**

Mark 2:13–22

In these verses, Mark tells the story of Jesus dining with tax collectors and sinners. He also tells of Jesus' parables about not fasting with the bridegroom, about putting new wine into new wine skins and foretells of his own future as being taken away from his disciples. These Bible verses tell us that Jesus came to save the sinners in the world and that we would have a new life and new beliefs. He was the new wine, the new cloth and his followers would be the fresh wine skins. For Jesus would teach us that we should not live under the fear of the Law, but with the love of God.

Brian Lowman

Saturday, February 27

**Psalm 55; Psalm 138, 139 , Gen 41:1–13,
1 Cor 4:1–7, Mark 2:23–3:6**

In reading these passages, I am reminded of several important Christian aspects that need reinforcement in our daily lives, so to remember why we are Christians in the first place.

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Thursday, March 25

Psalm 131, 132, 133; Psalm 140, 142, Exod 7:25–8:19, 2 Cor 3:7–18, Mark 10:17–31

Mark 10:31

If Jesus came back today, not for the "Second Coming," but just to hang out with the people His Dad created where do you think He might visit? It wouldn't be Washington DC to meet with the President or to address Congress. It wouldn't be in New York City to the United Nations headquarters or to Wall Street. Nor would He visit the executives of the multinational corporations. And He wouldn't be in the biggest church in Texas either!

No, since He is like God the Father, He might be in several places at the same times. And my guess is these would be places where the people possess the most genuine humility or greatest need. He might be in a meeting of recovering alcoholics or in a nursing home where many who are lonely and forgotten need love.

He might visit a low-income housing project to bring hope to the hopeless. He might sit down on a bar stool in a lounge and encourage a lonely man who feels he is worthless. Maybe he would visit a little church in Navarre where both humility and needs exist! He'd be doing the kind of things He did when He was here before--encouraging and helping people!

Jesus would continue to be the humble servant who washed the feet of the Apostles. Jesus said that He must do the works that His Father sent Him to do. So I suppose if He came back surreptitiously to check things out He would act pretty much as He did before. He would do His Father's work.

To pray for the knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry it out is that Jesus and humility are all about. Those who are "first" in this short life we live may be the "first by earthly

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So this straight-forward directive simply shows us what makes the Christian difference in each of our worlds: our behavior. Verse 50 mentions salt and peace, in this is the wisdom that connects the two.

Carolyn Igo

Wednesday, March 24

**Psalm 119:145–176; Psalm 128, 129, 130,
Exod 7:8–24, 2 Cor 2:14–3:6, Mark 10:1–16**

Mark 10:1–16

If you have suffered or witnessed the emotional and financial devastation of divorce, it is not hard to understand why Jesus says that Moses wrote the law of divorce because the people were hard of heart. He goes on to describe the ideal relationship between husband and wife “The two shall become one flesh.” “What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

The sermon continues when the children want to visit Him. He rebukes the spoilsports and busybodies who try to keep them away, and tells them, and us, that “it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”

It is a startling concept. Our most ordinary, daily relationships are sacred – husband and wife, child and parent. In them we catch a glimpse of our relationship to God, and our place in the kingdom to come. When we cherish our loved ones, we cherish the One who creates all bonds. The real pain and destruction of divorce is a shadow of the eternal pain of separation from God. The way we treat each other teaches us how to be in relationship with God.

Cynthia Carter

Lent 2010

First, when life is biting at our heels and the walls seem to be closing in and there seems to be no positive forces in our human brokenness, stop take a deep breath and remember. You can give up your burdens to the Lord and He will carry them for you. For His loving kindness will continue to last forever. He promised!

Second, when we start feeling arrogant about what we have and what we do and who we are and especially as Christians, put the breaks on and remember how St. Paul reminded the Corinthians emphatically that God is the boss. He alone knows what is deep within our hearts. God alone with His grace and mercy blesses us with our abilities to be able to gain the worldly things we have. And that God alone is the final judge of character. Not us!

Lastly, Mark is telling us to always remember that Jesus' authority on this earth was given by God through the Holy Spirit. And that there is no longer the need for the Law as dictated by the Jewish spiritual leaders of His day. Jesus and Jesus only is the truth, the word, the light and the way. Therefore, is it not right to do good at all times. And especially on the Sabbath! Amen!

Rich Apps

Sun 2; February 28

**Psalm 24, 29; Psalm 8, 84 , Gen 41:14–45, Rom
6:3–14, John 5:19–24**

Sun 2; Feb 26 John 5:19–24

Jesus, speaking to the Jews, defines his relationship with God, His father. He tells them that He is doing the work of the Father, as He and the Father are one. When we accept Jesus, we become one of God's children, just as Jesus is the Son of God. Through him we are forgiven and through the sacrament of Holy Communion, we become part of His body and blood.

Lent 2010

Our only method of reaching eternal life is to honor the Son and honor the Father. We must accept God as the Father, Jesus as His son and the Holy Spirit that brings us our faith.

Brian Lowman

Monday, March 1

Psalm 56, 57, 58; Psalm 64, 65 , Gen 41:46–57, 1 Cor 4:8–21, Mark 3:7–19a

Genesis 41:46–57

In this passage, the footnotes to my Bible say that Manasseh sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for *forget* and Ephraim sounds like the Hebrew for *twice fruitful*. Joseph names his children for helping him to forget his troubled past and remember his present joys. May Manasseh and Ephraim travel with us today!

Libbi Crowe

Tuesday March 2

Psalm 61, 62; Psalm 68 , Gen 42:1–17, 1 Cor 5:1–8, Mark 3:19b–35

Mark 3:19b–35

Jesus has been healing the sick and travels back to his home for rest. The people follow him and surround him so that he and his disciples cannot even eat a meal. He is described as Satan, but says that Satan cannot cast out Satan.

When his mother and brothers arrive came for him, but he looks at his followers and tells them, that we all are his brothers and sisters if we do the will of God. We are one with

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Monday, March 22

Psalm 31; Psalm 35, Exod 4:10–31, 1 Cor 14:1–19, Mark 9:30–41

Mark 9: 41

“Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.”

This is another passage where Jesus makes it clear that faith is the only ticket to the bus going to heaven, and that his love and salvation are available to all.

It matters not whether you light candles or don't. Nor whether you have musical instruments in church or don't. Nor whether you are immersed or sprinkled. Nor whether you prefer Rite I or Rite II.

Nope. Believe in Christ. Minister to others in His name. Be like a child in your faith. It's as simple, and as hard, as that.

Libbi Crowe

Tuesday, March 23

Psalm 121, 122, 123; Psalm 124, 125, 126, Exod 5:1–6:1, 1 Cor 14:20–40, Mark 9:42–50

Mark 9: 42–50

As Christians we have heard repeatedly that we are called upon to make sure our behaviors act as salt and light in the dark world in which we live. We know the difference between bland and flat and tasty and delicious is remarkable. Also, the difference between dark and dull and bright and clear.

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response is more useful and gratifying than Mathew's. A disciple during the time described might feel little need for prayer. Why pray when Emmanuel, God with us, is living and breathing in close proximity. If you needed the wisdom of God, you could hear the word of God from Jesus directly.

Prayer often asks for intercession to achieve an outcome, that is, "Please my Father, in the name of Jesus Christ your son I ask youIf it is Thy will, may it be done." Jesus interceded for the disciples to remove the unclean spirit from the child. Perhaps Jesus was helped in this task in some unknown way through intercession of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' response in Mark was a message for the future, when He would not be there to walk up and physically intercede. When we encounter powers beyond our ability, pray; pray with great humility in the name of Christ Jesus for intercession of the Holy Spirit in your life and the lives of those in need.

Tony Thompson

Sunday 5; March 21

Psalm 118;Psalm 145, Exod 3:16-4:12, Rom 12:1-12, John 8:46-59

Romans 12:1-12

We are like snowflakes; no two of us are alike. God has bestowed upon each one of us a unique set of gifts and talents. We should learn what these gifts and talents are, develop them and utilize them to the best of our ability for the betterment of others. We should give more credit to our brothers and sisters than we give ourselves. Our love should be real, and we should hate evil.

O. R. Smith.

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Him and He, one with God. We are part of his family which makes us part of the family of God.

Brian Lowman

Wednesday March 3

Psalm 72; Psalm 119:73-96 , Gen 42:18-28, 1 Cor 5:6-6:8, Mark 4:1-20

Mark 4:1-20

Over the years I have found the process of writing my thoughts for the Lenten Devotional somewhat laborious since I don't feel that I have the deep knowledge or understanding that one should have for such an undertaking. This year, I was pleased when I realized that the section of Mark I had picked contained the Parable of the Sower, one of the few parables that Jesus actually explained. I felt certain that even I could understand and write a devotional on a parable that Jesus took the time to explain.

Yet as I delved into the parable I came across the section between the parable and Jesus' explanation, Mark 4: 11 - 12, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven.'" Now I was perplexed since I thought the whole idea was to spread the good news so that others would turn and be forgiven.

As I looked deeper into the passage I realized that in this section, Jesus was quoting Isaiah 6: 9, 10, which sent me off again trying to understand what, was being conveyed. Finally, I arrived at the conclusion that Jesus isn't trying to exclude anyone from forgiveness and salvation; he is only explaining why some don't understand his teachings, believe and turn to accept his gift of forgiveness.

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The parables in the Bible as well as much of scripture are ripe with seeming contradictions and materials that are open for interpretation. This has led to centuries of study and more than a little heated discussion as we all seek to gain a deeper knowledge of God's word. Even a parable such as this, which I thought was thoroughly explained so that there would be no need to search, research and ponder its meaning, is in fact an open question.

In looking through Donna's EFM materials looking for insight, I came across this quote that a non-believer might say regarding parables; "I asked a straight question and all they told me was a stupid story." I contend that there is great benefit to the seemingly ambiguous nature of the parables as well as all scriptures in that it leads us into contemplation and study that feeds our need to know better our Lord and savior.

Chuck Howard

Thursday, March 4

**Psalm 70, 71; Psalm 74, Gen 42:29–38,
1 Cor 6:12–30, Mark 4:21–34**

Mark 4: 21–34, Psalm 70 & 71

The Kingdom of God is revealed to each of us as we are individually able to understand. That is what the parables do as I understand things Biblical. Parables are stories aimed at opening our understanding by description of life situations we can all comprehend. It is up to each of us how we use what we make of the information. Lent may be the season we move toward acting on what we understand.

These Psalms put words to my heart's deepest sense of God.. In His Power and Presence I can hear the message of the parables. In His Power I can do my best to act accordingly.

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thing in Paul's example: Apostleship by many people doing many different things.

Although apostleship is not the main point in the beginning of Chapter 12, Paul gives it heavy emphasis here at the end of it. It is not just one gift among others but a gift that is the sum and result of all the others. And, in the mystery of grace, it precedes the others as well. When spiritual gifts are accepted and used for God's glory, it advances the kingdom of God, even if everyone is doing something a little different all at the same time. That's apostleship.

So the message is, "All Together Now" as in: do **your** part in harmony with others. Or to put it another way, "All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir!"

Libbi Crowe

Saturday, March 20

**Psalm 102, 108; Psalm 33, Exod 2:23–3:15, 1 Cor
13:1–13, Mark 9:14–29**

Mark 9:14–29

The gospel of Mark describes demonic possession of a child. Jesus' disciples were given the power to cast out demons, yet in this case they were powerless. Jesus, however, was familiar with the source of this evil and, with authority, commanded the spirit to leave the child. When later asked why they could not do the same, the disciples were told, "This kind can come out only by prayer." This explanation almost appears to be hand-waving, and the temptation is to jump to the flowery allusions of Mathew for understanding. In Mathew, Jesus describes faith like a mustard seed and the ability to move mountains. But for me, I'll take Mark, and let others find comfort in the facilitations of Mathew. Mark's response is sparse and direct. Mark is a challenge, and it seems to me, must be closer to the true source by virtue of its simplicity. Upon reflection, Mark's

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and Romans, rich and poor, free and slave, mostly slave. It was also a city with a reputation for very loose morals.

The church in Corinth was made up of enthusiastic Christians, but they had factions, who did not get along. Paul wrote to them to guide and encourage them. His words are needed by the Christian church today just as they were needed by the church in Corinth.

Paul wrote that the church is one body, that all members are baptized into one through the Holy Spirit, no matter if they were Jews or Greeks, free or slave. One member is not more important than another, they need all the parts to be a whole.

We need all the parts to be a whole, young and old, male and female, active and not so active. I think St Augustine does a good job of being a whole. But let us pray for the wider church Episcopal, Catholic, Lutheran, all Christian churches that they may remember: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- and all were made to drink of one Spirit." Amen.

Sally Strickling

Friday, March 19

**Psalm 107:1–32; Psalm 107:33–43, Exod 2:1–22,
1 Cor 12:27–13:3, Mark 9:2–13**

1 Corinthians 12:27–13:3

Is Paul simply trying to say, "Different strokes for different folks"?

Paul applies the image of the body to the church as a whole and its members (1 Cor 12:27). The lists in 1 Cor 12:28-30 spell out the image by showing the variety of roles found in the church (Romans 12:6-8; Eph 4:11). Yet they all add up to one

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Carolyn Igo

Friday, March 5

**Psalm 69; Psalm 73, Gen 43:1–15, 1
Cor 7:1–9, Mark 4:35–41**

Gen 43: 1–15

I have really enjoyed reading these passages regarding Israel the father of Joseph and his many other sons. In this part of the story, Joseph has already been sold for 20 pieces of silver, has flourished, and made a worthy name as a smart business man and someone who can be trusted. After selling grain during the famine to his brothers (who did not recognize him), Joseph has imprisoned one of the brothers, Simeon, and exhorts the other brothers to return to their land with the grain AND bring back Benjamin. If they do not bring Benjamin (now the favorite since Joseph's troubles) Joseph vows that they will never see Simeon again if Benjamin does not return with them. It takes Judah and the other brothers a long time to convince Israel to let them take Benjamin back to Egypt.

These passages begin to speak of trying to resolve a "guilty conscience." This is the first time we see Judah trying to do the right thing. In addition, they are also returning the money secretly given them by Joseph on their initial trip, even doubling the amount (by accident or by intent to an equivalent of 20 pieces of silver). And they are taking other gifts back to Egypt. Perhaps this is their way of trying to make amends, even though they do not realize to whom they are making amends

Does our conscious prick us when we have done something we know in our hearts is not right or just? Mine does, and continues to do so, until I can resolve the "something." Even when we have committed some gross error or caused some terrible harm, we can still make ourselves right with God. He is always there to forgive us and steer us back to where we need to be.

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I shall continue to read this part of Genesis to see how the story plays out.

Mary Ann Pacana

Saturday, March 6

Psalm 75, 76; Psalm 23, 27; Gen 43:16–34; 1 Cor 7:10–24; Mark 5:1–20

Gen. 43: 16–34

The story continues with Benjamin being brought by Judah into Egypt to buy more grain and to rescue Simeon. The brothers are invited into Joseph's house to a feast. They are fearful of being set upon for not returning the money left in their sacks from their first visit. Explaining the situation to Joseph's steward, he doesn't understand as the money has been accounted for. What a dilemma! Who knows what anyone is doing, and why? And then, Simeon is brought to them! Joseph attends the meal, receiving the gifts brought for him, with much bowing. He inquires about their elderly father: "Is he well? Is he still alive?" And then Joseph sees Benjamin, his mother's son, his youngest brother! He is overcome with emotion, leaves the celebration, retires to his room and weeps. Returning to the dinner, he is served separately from the Egyptians as was the custom. Portions were taken from Joseph's table but 5 times as much was given to Benjamin!

What are we to make of these passages? Joseph is overwhelmed with love for his youngest brother, Benjamin. Is this the start of forgiveness for what he endured so long ago? What about his brothers who so horribly sold him for 20 pieces of silver? Have they begun to see the terrible thing they did? Though they do not recognize Joseph, is he going to be catalyst to push them into repentance? What pushes us to repent our sins: guilt, loneliness, physical symptoms (it just makes me "sick")? How do we begin to make amends for our wrong doings? Prayer certainly. Restitution of some kind? Whatever we are guilty of, we know we can be forgiven simply

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meals. He who eats and drinks before others puts judgment upon himself and can be condemned.

Amanda LaVigne

Wednesday, March 17

Psalm 101, 109; Psalm 119:121–144, Gen 50:15–26, 1 Cor 12:1–11, Mark 8:11–26

1 Cor 12:1–11

This reading starts out with a proclamation not to be ignorant. We must know and understand the nature of gifts if we are to use them as the Spirit intends! We are reminded that the gifts of the Spirit are many, and that they are given out to each of us "as the Spirit determines". As a community in faith, it is important to realize that each of us has Spirit-given gifts that we can use to further the message of Jesus. While we may not know explicitly what our gifts are, we are called to come together and give of them every year "for the common good." Therefore we must reflect and grow in order to learn what our gifts are and develop them so we can better serve our Lord. There are a variety of gifts, but only God.

Scott Ruppel

Thursday, March 18

**Psalm 69; Psalm 73, Exod 1:6–22,
1 Cor 12:12–26, Mark 8:27–9:1**

1 Cor 12:12–26

This passage is from a letter to the Christian church in Corinth from Paul in Ephesus. Corinth was a very large port city, 600,000 inhabitants with a diverse population of Greeks, Jews

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Galilee, to the Decapolis. These districts provide a *Gentile* setting for extending his ministry of healing because the people there acknowledged his power (Mark 7:29, 37). Jesus proceeds to act (Mark 7:33-35) as the common healers of the time.

So, here comes someone from the “outside”, someone “not like us.” And she has the temerity to ask for help! As if she deserves Jesus’ love just like anyone from Judea!

In reply, Jesus uses the figure of a household in which children at table are fed first and then their leftover food is given to the dogs under the table. This does recognize the preceding claim of the Jews to the ministry of Jesus; however, Jesus grants the Gentile woman's plea for the cure of her afflicted daughter because of her *faith*. Even if she is from the wrong side of the tracks.

Libbi Crowe

Tuesday March 16

Psalm 97, 99, 100; Psalm 94, 95, Gen 49:29–50:14, 1 Cor 11:17–34, Mark 8:1–10

1 Cor 11:17–34

This passage has deep meaning, and it can take many different contexts depending on how you read it.

First, I think of the rudeness of eating before others. Then it goes on, saying that if you are hungry, go home and eat at your own table rather than disrespect God who can judge you. The passage says ‘whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.’ Basically, Jesus died for us, gave himself for us, and if anything, we should respect him with our table manners when with others in community

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by returning to Jesus our Savior and repenting. What a wonderful gift, to be given again and again and again!

Mary Ann Pacana

Sunday 3; March 7

Psalm 93, 96; Psalm 34, Gen 44:1–17, Rom 8:1–10, John 5:25–29

Psalm 93

This hymn celebrates the kingship of God and points back in time as well as forward.

Looking back in time, it refers to the Genesis myth: the Sea completely covers the land, so humans could not yet live. The flood represents the primeval sea tamed by God in the act of creation. It is a symbol of chaos and rebellion as well as the unknown and unknowable. To a desert people, that much water was unimaginable. Sea, or Flood, roars in anger against God, who is personified in the storm. God's utterances or decrees show their authority by the victory over Sea.

Looking forward in time, this psalm, and Psalms 47; 96-99, are sometimes called *enthronement* psalms. They may have been used in a special liturgy during which God's ascent to the throne was ritually reenacted. They have also been interpreted as pointing to the coming of God as king at the end-time.

Libbi Crowe

Monday March 8

Psalm 80; Psalm 77, 79, Gen 44:18–34, 1 Cor 7:25–31, Mark 5:21–43

Mark 5:21–43

This passage tells us how much faith we should have in Jesus. The lady in the passage showed the amount of faith she had in Jesus, by believing that if she just touched him she would become whole again. After that she knew that if she just told the truth she would not be punished. I will always try to have the amount of courage she did and I know I can always count on Jesus to help me through troubling situations.

Jake Phillips

Tuesday March 9

Psalm 78:1–39; Psalm 78:40–72, Gen 45:1–15, 1 Cor 7:32–40, Mark 6:1–13

Mark 6:6 He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus was not able to perform his usual powerful deeds in the village that remembered him as a child, according to Mark. Jesus' power could not heal because of their lack of faith. And this surprised Jesus, apparently. So he sends his followers out to try to spread the spirit in other places.

We, too, are given the specific mission to exercise that authority in word and power as representatives of Jesus as part of our Christian education. As Lent wears on, let us look for the opportunities to do that!

Libbi Crowe

and yet they still have a bit of doubt that they fight. Most of us find ourselves fighting those same doubts. Especially during difficult times and trials. This time for me as a Vestry leader I am struggling with just letting things go to God. Each night in my prayers I release my worries and concerns. At about 2:00 AM I manage to wake and take them back. Trust and faith in the words Jesus gives the disciples (John 6:38) "For I have come here from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to have my own way," remind me it's not about me. I am spoiled and like things to go my way. This new responsibility has shown me right away that I do not have control and I am to trust and believe in the One who was sent to make things right.

Lent is a good time for me to learn to be obedient. I must trust. I must love and follow the path Jesus has made for us all. God provides, He always has and always will. I do not always see beyond my nose, but somehow I know if I let go, His power and grace will take care of me and us. I want to serve, I need to serve, so I will continue to learn, probably the hard way, but I know Jesus sees me trying. I will look forward to the ways He will lift me up. In Him, all things are possible, believe and receive. AMEN

--**Pamela Apps**

Monday, March 15

Psalm 89:1–18; Psalm 89:19–52, Gen 49:1–28, 1 Cor 10:14–11:1, Mark 7:24–37

Mark 7:24–37

Haven't you always wondered if Jesus was teasing the poor woman? That he knew what was coming, and intended all along to help her?

When Jesus departs to the district of Tyre for a break (Mark 7:24), he soon moves to Sidon and, by way of the Sea of

Sunday 4; March 14

Psalm 66, 67; Psalm 19, 46, Gen 48:8–22, Rom 8:11–25, John 6:27–40

Psalm 19, John 6:27–40

I have been taking a very strenuous journey since I decided to take a more active role in our parish life. The feeling of being more useful and supportive was driving me to the decision to be on our Vestry and learn more about being an Episcopalian. Having spent my entire adult life working in health care administration I experienced the whole picture of care delivery. A better understanding of the provider/patient and healthcare management system made me a more effective patient advocate. Understanding each element of the system and how it all comes together taught me to appreciate what is involved to give your life to caring for others. The same relationship applies to understand parish life and operation for me.

Reading the 19th Psalm first before the lesson in John I realized what gives me the strength to continue my faith journey. First, the Creation. Everyday appreciating the beauty of this home we have been given. Traveling across this nation and seeing the diversity of the geography and fascinating wildlife adjusting to the environmental changes without worry speaks to my own need to trust. Trust God to provide me what is needed. Looking at the beauty that surrounds me affording me security and family. Sure, there are storms, like the wildlife we adjust, although not as easily, but eventually. The restoration does appear and life forges forward. The beauty of Creation is enhanced and His power and glory are reflected in the sparkling gulf waters and silky beaches, vegetation regenerating, and people rebuilding. How can I not continue on?

In John 6:27-40 the issue of trust and faith are certainly testing the disciples. The challenge is an overwhelming quest for them. The disciples like myself try so hard to understand the speaking of Jesus. Jesus' has shown them he is the Messiah

Wednesday, March 10

Psalm 119:97–120; Psalm 81, 82, Gen 45:16–28, 1 Cor 8:1–13, Mark 6:13–29

Genesis 45:16–28

I remember as a little girl singing “Way, way back many centuries ago, not long after the bible began Jacob lived in the land of Canaan a fine example of a family man.” They are the opening words to Joseph and the Technicolor Dream Coat. I believe one of my favorite bible stories.

But my passage is not the whole story it is just the ending as the brothers discover that their brother is still alive the very brother they sold into slavery. “Joseph, Joseph is it really you?” How would you greet someone that had sold you into slavery and told your father you had been killed by a wild animal? Joseph had vivid dreams that were sent to him by God, Joseph believed in the dreams so strongly that he was able to forgive his brothers for selling him into slavery as he knew it had been Gods plan. I have to ask myself do I have such faith, am I really able to put my life in Gods hands?

Truthfully no, I do not have such faith that I am able just to put my fate in Gods hands. Therefore I am still a work in progress still struggling to find such faith, but I will never give up I will keep praying and asking for Gods help, and I will still thank him for the many blessings he has sent me. I doubt I will ever own a coat of many colors or save a nation from famine. So as we continue our journey through lent I pray we all have the courage of Joseph and know that God has charted our course, we just need enough faith to follow it.

Juliet Phillips

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Thursday, March 11

**Psalm 42, 43; Psalm 85, 86, Gen 46:1–7, 28–34,
1 Cor 9:1–15, Mark 6:30–46**

Mark, 6:30–46

This is just after Jesus had received the news of the beheading of John the Baptist, the one who said he only led the way for the Son of God, the one who baptized him, who witnesses God's voice saying the Jesus was indeed his Son and was also Jesus' cousin.

As the throngs of people follow him out into the country, Jesus feeds the crowd two fish and five loaves of bread, and then travels out into the hills to pray. Even in this time of great personal loss and sorrow, Jesus takes care of his flock, just like the Good Shepherd that He is.

Brain Lowman

Friday, March 12

**Psalm 88; Psalm 91, 92, Gen 47:1–26,
1 Cor 9:16–27, Mark 6:47–56**

Mark 6:55

“They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.”

Can you put yourself in this scene? The miracle worker comes to town, and your ailing mother, your blind brother, your fevered child has a chance at health and wholeness. So you scurry about, bringing those you love to Jesus for healing; for blessing; for life.

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Can you do so today? You don't need a mat. You don't need to go anyplace special. Just bring a friend to church. Or pray for them. Or with them.

Today, I will think about how to bring someone to Christ. Mat or not.

Libbi Crowe

Saturday, March 13

**Psalm 87, 90; Psalm 136, Gen 47:27–48:7,
1 Cor 10:1–13, Mark 7:1–23**

Mark 7:1–23

This discourse by Jesus is why we can eat bacon, as pointed out in the hilarious book, *Lamb: the Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal* by Christopher Moore.

But Jesus of course had something more important to say than what's on the menu. It is a warning to be careful of getting so wrapped up in the right way to do things that you forget why you are doing them. “You nullify the word of God in favor of your tradition that you have handed on,” Jesus says.

So let us observe Lent in humility, remembering that we do so not merely to carry on a tradition, but to examine our hearts, our motives, and our love for one another.

Libbi Crowe