



Bringing Home the Word



Second Sunday of Lent

March 1, 2015

God Is “For” Us

By Janel Esker

What does it mean to be “for” someone? We’re often “for” a particular sports team (mine happens to be the St. Louis Cardinals—go Redbirds!), declaring our allegiance by wearing team jerseys, sporting logo-embroidered hats or even painting our faces or bodies. We can be “for” a specific political candidate, displaying signs in our yard. Usually when we’re “for” someone or something, we’re against someone or something else.

Sunday Readings

Genesis 22:1–2, 9–13, 15–18

Accepting God’s “test,” Abraham offers Isaac’s life. But before any harm is done, God relents, provides a ram for the sacrifice, and blesses Abraham with a nation of descendants.

Romans 8:31–34

Paul reminds us that in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God shows his unconditional love for us and confirms his promise to provide for our salvation.

Mark 9:2–10

On a mountain with Peter, James, and John, Jesus is transfigured and appears in glory with Elijah and Moses. A voice declares, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”

A competition often is occurring.

Yet when a pregnant woman monitors everything she eats, drinks, or takes into her body because it will affect her unborn child, isn’t she “for” this baby? When an after-school tutor spends extra time ensuring a student understands his math homework, isn’t he “for” this young man? There’s no competition, no race to the finish. It’s simply someone pouring forth and living selflessly for someone else.

So when we hear Saint Paul claim in today’s second reading that “God is for us,” we should take pause and recognize the power of this truth. The almighty God, Lord of all the universe, is *for us*. Us sinners. Us frail, broken humans. God wants to give selflessly to us and to unceasingly pour out love to us. God’s most profound gift is revealed in today’s Gospel through Jesus’ transfiguration. We, like the disciples, are awed at Jesus’ glorious nature, and we are given a glimpse of our own transfiguration in eternal life. Our God is so “for” us that he has transformed our death and given us the precious gift of eternal life.

With this vision of glory always before us, our Lenten journey can be one of deep trust in God. Saint Paul said it best: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” We truly have nothing to fear. †

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Which individuals, groups, causes, and values am I “for?”
- Is my faith founded on the freedom that springs from Christ’s resurrection?

PRAYER

Lord, you watch over
me and love me as your
child. Help me to see all
people as your children
and treat them with
gentleness, love, and
respect.

—*Mindful Meditations for Every Day of
Lent and Easter*, Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

The Redeemer, Mary, and You

By Fr. Matthew Allman, CSSR

The month of March will be spent settling in to Lent, this season of conversion. Our parishes will be accompanying our RCIA candidates and catechumens, the elect, as they ramp up their preparations for the Easter Vigil and full acceptance into the Church. In our homes, offices, and schools we'll be attempting to live out whatever we have taken on as our particular Lenten discipline.

For some of us, that discipline might take a classic, penitential form as we fast and lay off the sweets; for others, it might take the shape of a newer practice of prayerful meditation, daily Mass-going, or help with a charity where we can engage in hands-on giving.

No matter what we do during Lent, we are not doing it alone. This season of preparation and conversion reassures us of company on our journey and a sense of companionship as our Christian community prepares for renewal and rebirth in the baptismal water of Easter.

If Lent is a privileged period of growth in discipleship, then Mary is an ideal Lenten companion. We do well to invite her into our lives and to recognize that she is already in our midst. This is particularly true as we celebrate the Marian feast of the Annunciation on March 25.

Mary's willing "yes" to God's plan and her openness to the confusion and adventure of discipleship set a tone for all of us brothers and sisters, sons and



daughters, who follow after her. At the word of the angel, she makes room for Christ to take flesh and be borne within her. Perhaps it can be part of our Lenten prayer that the season will help us to do the same, becoming God-bearers for our world even as we approach the Easter font to be reborn ourselves. †

The Marian feast
of the Annunciation
takes place
this year
on March 25

Questions People Ask: Fish versus Meat

By Fr. Paul Borowski, CSSR

Who decided fish doesn't constitute meat for Catholics? –Shirley

Dear Shirley,

Latin is the official language of the Catholic Church. Canon law as written in Latin says we must abstain from *carne* ("meat"), a word that refers to warm-blooded animals that walk on the ground. By that definition, fish are allowed.

As we enter the season of Lent, we must remember that our acts of penance should be more than thinking about just giving something up—like meat. Our fasting needs to lead us to a closer relationship with God than just being a time of sacrifice.

The Committee on Pastoral Practices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a wonderful pamphlet titled *Penitential Practices for Today's Catholics*. It says, "By fasting and self-denial, by living lives of moderation, we have more energy to devote to God's purposes and a better self-esteem that helps us to be more concerned with the well-being of others. Voluntary fasting from food creates in us a greater openness to God's Spirit and deepens our compassion for those who are forced to go without food. The discomfort brought about by fasting unites us to the sufferings of Christ. Fasting should bring to mind the sufferings of all those for whom Christ suffered." †

WEEKDAY READINGS March 2–6

Mon. Daniel 9:4–10 / Luke 6:36–38
Tue. St. Katharine Drexel:
Isaiah 1:10, 16–20 / Matthew 23:1–12
Wed. St. Casimir:
Jeremiah 18:18–20 / Matthew 20:17–28

Thu. Jeremiah 17:5–10 / Luke 16:19–31
Fri. Genesis 37:3–4, 12–13, 17–28 /
Matthew 21:33–43, 45–46
Sat. Sts. Perpetua and Felicity:
Micah 7:14–15, 18–20 /
Luke 15:1–3, 11–32