

REFLECTION

Where is God?" was the refrain posed by a sister who ministers in Port-au-Prince as she recounted to a group of religious leaders stories of immense suffering and death following the earthquake in Haiti. Was God in the earthquake? Did God send it to test our faith? How can we recognize the voice of a loving God in such times of desolation?

Today's Gospel shows Jesus during a similar time of struggle. He is returning from the Jordan, where he has just been baptized by John and had a powerful experience of knowing the certainty of God's delight in him as beloved Son. He has also sensed the Spirit making a home in him. The contrast between this idyllic scene at the river and his bleak struggle in the desert is stark. Doubts come flooding over Jesus: Was that experience in the Jordan to be trusted? Is he truly loved by God? If God is so loving, then why do people go hungry? Why does the all-powerful one let the rulers of the world grab power and glory for themselves instead of looking out for the good of their people? Why doesn't God save beloved ones from disaster? At stake in this struggle is both the question of who is God and who is Jesus as beloved Son of God. "If you are the Son of God..." taunts the tempter. And so it is with us, too, when great trials shake our self-understanding and cause us to question our reliance on God.

The readings today do not provide reasoned arguments in answer to these deep questions, but they do show us a way to engage the struggles as we are invited more deeply into the mystery of suffering, dying and rising as God's cherished ones. The reading from Deuteronomy reminds us of the long history of God's saving deeds and asks us to declare these, to remind us that our faith in times of trouble is not baseless.

In the Gospel, we see Jesus relying on the Word of God to guide and strengthen him. He engages in a kind of Bible battle with the devil, a sobering reminder that anyone can quote Scripture to their own purposes. Jesus shows that daily immersing ourselves in Scripture enables us to recognize the authentic voice of God and reject the traitorous lead of the tempter. Jesus unmasks the false allure of believing in a God who would prove divine love by acting like an indulgent parent, giving in to our every desire. He exposes the untruth of believing in a God whose power is displayed in ostentatious empires or in manipulating the laws of nature. His replies to the devil reveal that God does not send misfortune to test us, nor does God respond to "tests" that we construct in order to prove God's loving nature. God is not a sadistic puppeteer, who dallies with us to see whether we will keep steady in our faith. God is continually drawing us ever more deeply into the mystery of the divine love, most especially in times of greatest adversity.

Lent provides us an opportunity to embrace anew such struggles as Jesus faced. Like him, we claim the power of the Spirit that has been given us in baptism and daily immerse ourselves in the word, which, as Paul reminds us, is ever near, in our mouth and in our heart. Clarity in hearing that word comes when we go apart to deserted spaces and when we fast so as to sharpen our hunger for God and for acting in solidarity with God's starving people. Such practices prepare us to find God in the faces of those who suffer and to be ready for the final struggle, where like Jesus we readily pray, "Into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46; Ps 31:6).

- America Magazine, February 2010

CATHOLICS COME HOME



Are you Returning to Your Catholic Roots! Welcome Home!

Whether you've been away from the Church for 1, 5, 10, 15, or even 30 years or more, our parish family is delighted to welcome you home to the Catholic Church. If you have not already done so, we invite you to visit the *Catholics Come Home* website in English at CatholicsComeHome.org. Don't remember how to go to confession? That's alright . . . when you enter the confessional, simply tell the priest you've forgotten how and he will guide you through the process, step by step. [Confessions at St. Joseph Church are held every Saturday evening from 6:30-7:30 PM or by appointment.] **The Catholics Come Home group has been enjoying getting to know our Faith and each other. Our next meeting is Monday at 7:00 in the Church Meeting Room. All are welcome!** For more information about Catholics Come Home call the Parish Office at 447-2354.

LENTEN OUTREACH PROJECTS

As part of our Lenten journey with the Lord, please consider those less fortunate by supporting the following Outreach Commission Projects.

Monthly Food Drive for the Food Locker - The monthly food drive will be held during Lent the weekend of March 13-14. Items especially needed include: canned soups, ravioli, chili, peanut butter, oatmeal and boxed cereals. Please pray in earnest for those in need of this food and assistance.

Annual Paper & Plastics Drive for Opportunity House - The weekend of March 20-21, we will hold our annual Paper & Plastic Supplies drive at all Masses for the Opportunity House Homeless Shelter. Please "stock up" while doing your shopping in the next weeks to prepare for this drive. Paper and plastic products needed include: toilet paper, paper towels, plastic "food handling" gloves, plastic food wrap, Ziploc Bags (freezer storage bags and sandwich bags), 13 gallon kitchen garbage bags and "Hefty" Lawn & Leaf bags. Please pray for the homeless and those who assist them.

LENTEN SCHEDULE



Daily Mass - Daily Mass will be celebrated at 12:15 PM in the Chapel throughout the Lenten season in addition to our regular morning schedule.

Daybreaks - Please pick up your complimentary copy of Daily Reflections for Lent & Easter to help you with your Lenten Resolutions. We have provided only one copy per household.

Friday Night Soup - Each Friday night during Lent at 5:30 PM you are invited to enjoy soup and bread in the Notre Dame Gym before praying the Stations of the Cross.

Stations of the Cross - You are invited to pray the Stations of the Cross each Friday evening at 7:00 PM The service will conclude each week with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



FOOD LOCKER COLLECTION – Last week-end's food collection brought in a total of 1867 canned and packaged food items. Our next food collection for St. Mary's Food Locker will be March 13-14. Thanks for your generosity.

St. Joseph Relay for Life Team - This year's Relay for Life will be held on Saturday, June 26, 2010 at Vacaville High School. Team St. Joseph is already registered to participate and our online link is up. It's not too early to join our team and start fundraising to find a cure. Go to: www.RelayForLife.org/VacavilleCA team name: St. Joseph. Sign ups will also be done after Masses beginning in April. Please pray for all those affected by this disease. For more information or to join the St. Joseph's Team by phone, please call Donna Novak at (707) 447-6797.



ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

Please give generously to the Annual Catholic Appeal - 25% comes back to our parish.

Commitment Weekend for the 2010 Annual Catholic Appeal, will be held at all Masses next weekend. Each and every gift will make a difference in someone's life. Through our support, we can assure the continued existence of many vital social service programs that assist tens of thousands of people in need; assist with the formation of diocesan seminarians, and provide need-based tuition assistance to families desiring a Catholic school education for their children. Please respond generously when you are asked to make a gift. God's return to you will be even more generous.



FAITH FORMATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on Tuesday 2/23 for all Confirmation and OCIC candidates and Wednesday 2/24 for all First Communion candidates from 4:00-6:00 PM. Notre Dame Students will receive Reconciliation on 2/24 after their regularly scheduled school mass at 9:30 AM.

The Youth Group is working with "Blue Star Moms" on a community service project sending care packages to support our troops. This weekend 2/20-2/21 and next weekend 2/27-2/28 we will be collecting snack sized, individually packaged items such as mints, candies, cookies, granola bars, energy bars, cereal, fruit snacks, powder drinks, beef jerky sticks, canned foods and meats (with pop tops). We also need gallon size plastic zip top bags to collect all the donated goods, packing tape and monetary donations made payable to "Blue Star Moms." Blue fliers are located in the Narthex for additional information or log on to www.solanobluestarmoms.org. Thank you for your generous donations!

NOTRE DAME SCHOOL

Notre Dame School is now accepting applications for Kindergarten for the 2010-2011 school year. These forms are available in the school office. You need to bring a copy of the child's birth certificate, baptismal certificate, immunization records, and a letter from your parish. Notre Dame School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national/ethnic origin in admission policy or employment practices. For information, call the school office at 447-1460, 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM Monday-Friday.



PARKING AT ST. JOSEPH



Please obey all parking signs and curb markings and not park in "no parking" areas or "fire lane" zones **especially in front of the rectory garages**. Those cars we find parked improperly in our parking lot will receive a parking warning "ticket." Your car could be towed if you are parked blocking the garages at the Rectory or parked in a fire lane or red zone in our parking lot. Please use marked spaces. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our parking lot safe.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon. 1 Pt 5:1-4; Ps 23:1-3,4-6; Mt 16:13-19
 Tues. Is 55:10-11; Ps 34:4-7,16-19; Mk Mt 6:7-15
 Wed. Jon 3:1-10; Ps 51:3-4,12-13,18-19; Lk 11:29-32
 Thurs. Est C:12,14-16,23-25; Ps 138:1-3,7-8; Mt 7:7-12
 Fri. Ez 18:21-28; Ps 130:1-8; Mt 5:20-26
 Sat. Dt 26:16-19; Ps 119:1-2,4-5,7-8; Mt 5:43-48
 Sun. Gn 15:5-12,17-18; Ps 27:1,7-9,13-14; Phil 3:17-4:1; Lk 9:28-36

MASS INTENTIONS

Mon. 7:00 AM----- Cam Leduc, R.I.P.
 Mon. 12:15 PM----- Eddie Corpuz, R.I.P.
 Tues. 7:00 AM ----- Alfred Diaz, R.I.P.
 Tues. 12:15 PM----- Brookie Mae Decuir, R.I.P.
 Wed. 8:15 AM ----- Mariano Dumuk, R.I.P.
 Wed. 12:15 PM----- Int. of Ramon Vesparas
 Thurs. 7:00 AM----- Bonifacia Maravillas, R.I.P.
 Thurs. 12:15 PM----- Int. of Espie Vernal
 Fri. 7:00 AM----- Betty Pisani, R.I.P.
 Fri. 12:15 PM----- Jack Gutierrez, R.I.P.
 Sat. 8:15 AM----- Eileen McCarthy, R.I.P.
 Sat. 5:00 PM----- Daniel Winters, R.I.P.
 Sun. 7:00 AM----- Members of the Parish
 Sun. 8:30 AM----- Sick Members of the Parish
 Sun. 10:00 AM----- World Peace
 Sun. 12:00 PM----- Vocations to the Priesthood