



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee February 2025

Help Me to Be

By Associate Carol Wesley

February brings us to Ordinary Time in the Roman Catholic tradition, or the Sundays after Epiphany in the Episcopal (RCL) lectionary. This year, the Gospels in both traditions are the same. We begin with the Presentation where Simeon proclaims that Jesus will be the light of the world. We in turn bring his light to the people in our lives, spreading his love to the greater world.

Secondly, Jesus then teaches us that we can leave behind our fears and insecurities finding our happiness and purpose in him. We are called to follow him and trust in his love.

Thirdly, Jesus tells us that the poor, the grief stricken, those persecuted and hated in society are God's beloved and we in following him are to give preferential love to our siblings in Christ.

Finally, Jesus preaches that we should live by the Golden Rule. A life lived in love, forgiveness, and mercy benefits others as well as our own happiness and fulfillment. We can pray:

Holy God, help me to be.

Be gentle in a world that is fixated on strength.

Be kind in a world that is blind to injustice.

Be compassionate in a world that is wedded to selfishness.

Be hopeful in a world that is steeped in despair.

Be peace in a world that is drunk on warring.

Be humble in a world that is obsessed with power.

Be love in a world that is in desperate need of love.

Holy God, help me to be, if only for today.

Amen.

- Bishop Deon K. Johnson

Thank you to Associate Carol Wesley for this month's reflections.

February 2 | The Presentation | Luke 2:22-40

In this gospel, Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple to be presented. Here they meet Simeon, a holy man. The Holy Spirit has promised him that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. Taking Jesus in his arms he prays the words known to us in Compline or Night Prayer: "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory for your people Israel." Following Jesus, we are to be the light to the world. How do you shine your light in the darkness of today's world?

February 9 | 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time/After Epiphany | Luke 5: 1-11

Jesus had been preaching all day, so he stepped into Peter's boat and preached from it away from the shore. Peter had been fishing all night with no success: he had nothing to eat or sell that day. Jesus tells him to go to deeper water and put out his nets. Peter is dubious but obeys Jesus. He and his partners, John and James, caught so many fish that the nets were beginning to break and the boats started to sink. Jesus tells them to not be afraid because they will now be "catching people." They left everything behind and followed Jesus. Like Peter, we can ask ourselves when do we feel like failures? When do we feel hopeless and ready to give up? When do we see a bleak future? Jesus tells us to go deeper, to leave behind our insecurities, and to find security in him. Follow Jesus. Trust in his love.

February 16 | 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time/After Epiphany | Luke 6:17-26

Jesus preaches the Beatitudes. Familiar to us, they begin: "blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God...". They are about God, about the nature of God and whom God blesses. They tell us about God's kingdom and who are especially important to God. What does this tell us about our priorities in life? Those people who are poor, who mourn, who are hated and persecuted by society are God's beloved. How do we give God's preferential love to these people, our siblings in Christ?

February 23 | 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time/After Epiphany | Luke 6:27-38

Jesus tells us how to live our lives: to live by the Golden Rule – do to others as you would have them do to you. Jesus tells us to love, to forgive, to be merciful. He tells us to even love our enemies, even those who disagree with us, to not judge even those we find contemptible. In short, he tells us not to let our circumstances whether personal or societal to control us. Ultimately, a life lived in love, forgiveness, and mercy not just benefits others, but is the way towards our own happiness and fulfillment. In this time of division and distrust, how do I love the seemingly unlovable, forgive the unforgivable, show mercy to the most recalcitrant? How do I shine the light of Jesus to the world.