



Racine Dominicans
Committed to Truth + Compelled to Justice

PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee

March 2021

Preview of Coming Attractions

We've just come down from the mountain. The Second Sunday of Lent presents us with the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor. But what goes up must come down, and this event is no exception. From Mount Tabor they go to Jerusalem. Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem where he will suffer and die. Why would the Church present us with the Transfiguration just as we begin the season of the passion?

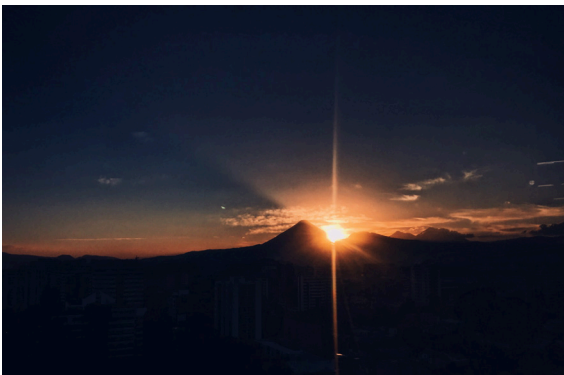
I think it's because we could never survive the rest of Lent if we didn't know how the story will end. We're given a preview of the ending. Jesus shines. He shows himself as the Light of the World. But all hell is going to break loose to snuff out that Light. These three poor apostles have no idea what they are in for. What they experienced on the mountain will be eclipsed: The Son will be darkened by death.

There is a method in the Church's madness. Like the Beloved in the Song of Songs, she will go searching for her Lover. The sight of his face is fixed in her memory, and despite the darkness she will go looking for him. She will not be disappointed. She will find him, cling to him, and not want to let go.

The Church turns to John's Gospel during these weeks of Lent, as it does each year. Ever wonder why? John writes as 'the disciple that Jesus loved.' Perhaps the Church is trying to say, "That's you...put those glasses on as you read these Gospel texts." The cleansing of the temple, the one so loved, ourselves as that little grain of wheat...how is this me?

If we look a little deeper, this really is our story...not just for Lent, but for life. In the first fervor of our newly found relationship with Christ Jesus, we too want to stay on the mountain and build our shrine there. But then all the lights go out, and he is gone...no sweetness in prayer, no emotional highs. Just the drab day-to-day slugging it out. Our faith is sorely tested. Maybe it was all an illusion...maybe I'm just fooling myself...

But we remember that face full of light, and we hang on, whistling in the dark of our faith. Now and then we have our little Easters. But for now we too will have to set our faces toward Jerusalem, and the horrors of Holy Week. What keeps us steady is the preview of coming attractions.



Jesus, you shine!

I need to take a long loving look.

The roller coaster of my life takes a downward dive, often when I least expect.

Will I survive?

Yes.

Your face is a mirror of what I shall be.

Thank you to S. Kathy Slesar for the March Reflections.

March 7, 2021 - 3rd Sunday of Lent

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life. (John 6:68c, Responsorial Psalm)

What words in today's readings hold the promise of everlasting life or help you to be a faithful disciple? Perhaps they are the commandments or Jesus' demand that the temple be a place of worship, not a marketplace. Or the disciples' recollection that "zeal for your house will consume me." We are midway through Lent. How zealous are we about our Lenten practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer and how are they helping us hear and respond to God's words? The psalmist reminds us that our hearts will rejoice when we live according to God's law. God's words are a guide for living well, for being of service. Catherine of Siena prays that "God may set you on fire with love." Those words clearly summarize our call as faithful disciples. How do our Lenten practices reflect love?

March 14, 2021 - 4th Sunday of Lent

God so loved the world.... John 3:16

All three of today's readings speak of God's great compassion and love for us. "Early and often God sent his messengers; God had compassion on the people." (2 Chronicles 36: 15- 16) "Because of the great love God has for us... brought us to life with Christ." Ephesians 2: 4 - 5. "God so loved the world...." John 3:16. How deeply are we convinced of God's great love for us, as we are right now, no conditions, no exceptions? When we believe in God's love for us, we are able to love those around us. We are called to love as we are loved. We are also reminded that we are created in Christ Jesus for good works. What good works are part of your Lenten practices? Who models doing good works in your life? May we be open to the good works we are called to do.

March 21, 2021 - 5th Sunday of Lent

I will be their God and they shall be my people. Jeremiah 31: 33

God never failed Christ and God will never fail us. Even in our darkest hour and times of great distress, God is still and always with us. Christ recognized that in his own journey, during his own darkness as he wrestled with his approaching death, that God was with him. God's love carried him through and God's love carries us through our dark times. We are also called, as faithful Christians, to be with others as they go through their own dark times, whether sickness, loss of job, deep grief or isolation and loneliness. Reaching out to others brings light and hope. Be a reflection of God's love today.

March 28, 2021 - Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Jesus said, "You will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat." Mark 11: 2

The colt and Jesus were about to experience something that had never happened to either of them before. We too are entering Holy Week 2021, something that has never happened to us before. We are not the same as we were last year. We continue to live through a pandemic and have adapted, learned, suffered, endured and held on to hope. Like Christ, we journey forward knowing our God never abandons us. Easter will come. What new insights, experiences will help you carry your cross this Holy Week? How do you know God is with you? What gives you hope as we wait for Easter?