



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee

March 2023

The Cross

By S. Carla Mae Streeter

We have moved from the short Ordinary Time, with its pondering the Incarnation, to the season of Lent, and what we call the Pascal Mystery. But wait...let's not let go of the Incarnation so quickly. It has three steps, all of them down: the Baby, then the Cross, then the Bread. As Jack Shea wrote, "Like a baritone in a bar, he never goes home." Drunk with love, Catherine says.

We enter the season of the cross. Have you ever wondered why we had to be saved this way? With that Baby, all grown up, hanging on a cross? Be attentive to the sequence of the readings. We are given a preview of how it will all end: the transfiguration. Then we are told he thirsts, not for water, really, but for us. Next, we learn that we really are quite blind to what is going on, and finally, that like Lazarus, we need to be brought back from the dead.

So Love sets out in search for us. He goes looking for wherever we are. And where are we? Human trafficked during the Super Bowl. Demeaned and exposed on the Porno-screen. Tortured in Ukraine. Buried in rubble in Serbia. This is where we are. This is today's cross. The crucified is no stranger. He swallows death, the poison pill, and dies. But Love like his cannot die. Instead he does away with death, and safe in this Shepherd's arms, so shall we.

*I don't like to look at you...
hanging there, all bloody.
I don't like to watch the news either.
For there you are again, in all your disguises.
What will we invent next, to wound you?
So, they all went home Good Friday night.
Surely, this is no way to save a world...
or is it?
And the Father said, "Watch Me!"
In the darkness of our winters
we too wait...to be brought back from the dead.*



Thank you to the Rev. Dr. Carol Wesley for this month's reflections.

March 5, 2023 | First Sunday in Lent | Genesis 12: 1-4a

Lenten themes include sin, self-examination, self-denial, and repentance. Perhaps, this passage from Genesis calls us to a different Lenten practice: God tells Abraham to go to a specified land....God will then bless Abraham so Abraham will be a blessing.

God intends Abraham to be a blessing to others as we are to be blessings to others. How, this Lent, have we recognized the gifts God has given us...and in thanksgiving, used those gifts to be a blessing to this hurting world?

March 12, 2023 | Second Sunday in Lent | John 4:5-42

The Samaritan woman realizes that she has had an encounter with God at this well and becomes a strong witness and evangelist in her growing faith in Jesus. She calls others to Jesus, the living water, and people believe because of her.

How do we as followers of Jesus tell the good news of Jesus by the way we live our lives?
How are we living water for others?

March 19, 2023 | Third Sunday in Lent | John 9: 1-41

In this gospel story, Jesus heals a blind man. In Jesus's times, people thought that illness and disability existed because someone had sinned. The assumption was that someone was at fault and caused the blindness. No one except the man Jesus heals seems to understand what has happened: they take the blind man to the neighbors, to his family and finally to the Pharisees, but no one can see the healing power of Jesus' love because they are stuck in their own assumptions about blindness as punishment.

How do our biases and assumptions stop us from seeing God's work in the world?
How do we open our hearts to see the face of Jesus in those different than ourselves and bring God's love to those in need?

March 26, 2023 | Fourth Sunday in Lent | John 11:1-45

The first thing Jesus says to the community after bringing Lazarus back to life is to unbind him and let him go. In our final days of Lent, we too are called to lose to those "wrappings" that keep us bound to ignorance and sin.

Go into the world, as Jesus charges Lazarus, to bring God's love to this earth.