

April 3, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

FOLLOWING THE TESTIMONY OF GOD

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Excerpts from Today's Readings

Moses implored the LORD, his God, saying, "Why, O LORD, should your wrath blaze up against your own people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with such great power and with so strong a hand? ... Let your blazing wrath die down; relent in punishing your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, saying, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage.'" So the LORD relented of the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people.

EXODUS 32:11-14

Jesus said to the Jews: "If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is not true. But there is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true.... The works that the Father gave me

to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. Moreover, the Father who sent me has testified on my behalf.... You search the Scriptures, because you think you have eternal life through them; even they testify on my behalf. But you do not want to come to me to have life.”

JOHN 5:31,36,39-40

Reflection

It is not far-fetched to imagine that the majority of those who regularly read Scripture for reflection and spiritual guidance feel more than a minimum of discomfort when they peruse the history of religious authority operating within society as a force for oppression of the people, as leaders for financial benefit, or surrendering tradition to lives that make a mockery of faithfulness to God's call. As a consequence, some within the community feel justified in living questionable lives under the mantle of religious identity. In the days of Jesus' ministry, he found himself confronted with the same duplicity—religious leadership willing to defame his ministry and miracles, while flaunting their personal value and importance in God's eyes, and all too frequently living lives complicit with the violence and oppression of the Romans.

As a people of faith, we hope to be part of a tradition that adheres to the best of what the Scriptures teach us about fidelity, community, and personal religious identity. Unfortunately, we see ways in which our aspirations are not necessarily mirrored in the centers of power we trust to guide us. In these days of uncertainty, our Lenten prayer and practice invite us to surrender to the call of the Beatitudes as we navigate our walk with God. Jesus moves among a people searching for the living power of the Gospel in all that they are and do. Justice and mercy, the hallmarks of the Covenant, are the soul of Jesus, life history and community identity. But these supreme values are woven into daily life through the healing grace of a spiritual commitment to the lived reality of Jesus.

Each day of Lent may we remember that Jesus' mandate for love strengthens our inner conviction to be the justice we seek, living the fullness of the mercy that heals:

1. Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
 7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
 8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
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Questions to Ponder

- How do you feel invited to pursue justice in our society while holding fast to your call to mercy?
 - Do the beatitudes help you to recognize that your zeal for others' good is ultimately a call to promote justice *and* peace?
 - How would you reach out to those you see mistreating others, in order to foster justice in your neighborhood, city, state, etc.?
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