

March 8, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

MERCY AND LOVE

By Sister Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

Thus says the Lord: If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday; then the Lord will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails. The ancient ruins shall be rebuilt for your sake, and the foundations from ages past you shall raise up; "Repairer of the breach," they shall call you, "Restorer of ruined homesteads."

ISAIAH 58:9b-12

Reflection

Today's passage from Isaiah picks up from yesterday's first reading. Once

again, we are given words of wisdom to live by that can renew us during this time of Lent. What is important for us not to gloss over in the first part of the first sentence is: “if you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation, and malicious speech.” We need to ponder these words and determine if we are oppressing anyone, if we are falsely accusing another, if we are guilty of using malicious speech. We cannot move past these words too quickly because we want to hear and reflect on the beautiful imagery that follows. Isaiah is inviting us to reflect on our words and actions.

Who are the oppressed today? Unfortunately, they abound all around us. Far too many of our brothers and sisters are without adequate shelter and suffer from food insecurities. Oppression is others working actively, and oftentimes subtly, to their detriment. How might you and I find ways to counter these offenses?

"Malicious speech" jumped out at me because so many of us listen to the negative self-talk within us. Let us pray for the silencing of these voices that distract and deter us from our desire to fully embrace the person God created us to be. And when we hear malicious speech, let us not remain silent because to do so can be inferred by others that we agree with what is being said. Malicious speech must not be ignored.

Mercy and Love

Have Mercy, O God, on your servant. I place my sins before you as I seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

A clean heart within me I ask to be restored. May my life reflect the desire and love I have for you, O God.

May my songs of praise rise to greet you this day. Open wide my heart and may my presence be full of gentleness, peace, and joy.

Let malicious speech flee from my mind and may words of comfort, love, and welcome find a home in me. May I seek what is from you and from you only, turning from all that offends you.

May my Lenten journey continue to uncover all that is found wanting within me. May I pick up my cross and embrace all that comes my way this day.



Photo by Rajesh Rajput

For Pondering

- Call to mind the oppressed in your life. How might you ease their burdens? Who might you invite to assist you?
- Assess whether or not you listen to critical and unhelpful self-talk. What words might replace the malicious words that cause you harm and self-doubt?

For Prayer

*O God of mercy and love,
may our Lenten journey continue to bring to light
all that needs reconciling and forgiveness in our lives.
May we seek paths that lead to repentance
and actions that enable both ourselves and others to flourish.
Amen.*

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