

September 1, 2024



Daily Reflections

Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

INSIDE THE LIVING WORD

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

In your observance of the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin upon you, you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it. Observe them carefully, for thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations.

DEUTERONOMY 4:2, 6

All good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change. He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction.

JAMES 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

Jesus responded, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts. You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition.” He summoned the crowd again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit...”

MARK 7:6-8, 14-15, 21-22

Reflection

As we move into September liturgies, our readings continue to unpack the ways in which the Word(s) of God come to life in the world—how they are received, and how they are distorted by human weakness and ambition. In Deuteronomy, Moses exhorts the Hebrews to absorb the commandments of God as the gift of the One who comes, to receive them in their hearts, minds, souls, and strength—as these are manifested in love for God and neighbor. He recognizes that the love embraced in the Great Covenant is the core of the ‘wisdom and intelligence’ that are revealed to the world through the integrity of the community. As the prophetic father of the Hebrew nation, Moses labors to help the people realize that Law is not designed to control them, but rather to free them to live with integrity, compassion, and spiritual devotion.

In the Epistle of James, we uncover the unfolding of Christian teaching within the consciousness of Jewish communities dispersed in areas beyond Israel. Thus, the Word of the Covenant joins with the Word of the Gospel in the Living Word of Jesus among the faithful. This comingling of spiritual roots leads to a consciousness that the truth of faith is not merely a profession (a word) of belief, but a living commitment of heart and soul to the works of charity which Jesus incarnated throughout his life of ministry. Words of faith become living words of service.

In Mark’s Gospel, we observe Jesus harking back to the harsh words of Isaiah as he confronts the people with their hypocrisies—proclaiming fidelity to God’s law and the prophets, while living lives of selfishness and arrogance, ‘teaching as doctrines human precepts,’ a covenant of fools, not of love. Jesus is quick to root out the professions of hypocrisy that mask a false heart with the language of purity and devotion, but do nothing to fulfill the commandment to ‘love one’s neighbors as oneself.’

All of these scriptural texts stand as measures of our own professions of faith, devotion, compassion, purity of heart, and care for the downtrodden. Like generations past, we are urged to embrace God's Covenant as a map for harmony and spiritual cohesion, not as a manual of dictates to regulate behavior. We are gifted with Scripture as a narrative opening us to the mystery of God in our lives, not as a final formula defining every action or decision for the future. We are daily invited to discern our fidelity to the comingling of Covenant, Gospel, and personal Mission that mark our souls with the seal of a living Word, uniting what we profess and what we live in loving actions for others.



Photo by David C. Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

- What does it mean to you to say that as a person of faith, you are joined to a Covenant of Love with God?
- How has Scripture gifted you with a sense of freedom in your personal discernment and life choices day to day?

- How are you crafting your life mission in a way aligned to the universal Gospel call to care for the poor, the lost, the oppressed, and the excluded?
-

If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!

Support CSD



Visit Website

714-744-3172

Join Mailing
List



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

