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Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

JOSEPH, BELOVED SON

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Today's First Reading

Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him a long tunic. When his brothers saw that their father loved him best of all his sons, they hated him so much that they would not even greet him. One day, when his brothers had gone to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem, Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers, you know, are tending our flocks at Shechem. Get ready; I will send you to them." So, Joseph went after his brothers and caught up with them in Dothan. They noticed him from a distance, and before he came up to them, they plotted to kill him. They said to one another: "Here comes that master dreamer! Come on, let us kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns here; we could say that a wild beast devoured him. We shall then see what comes of his dreams."

When Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from their hands, saying, "We must not take his life. Instead of shedding blood," he continued, "just throw him into that cistern there in the desert; but do not kill him outright." His

purpose was to rescue him from their hands and return him to his father. So, when Joseph came up to them, they stripped him of the long tunic he had on; then they took him and threw him into the cistern, which was empty and dry. They then sat down to their meal. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels laden with gum, balm and resin to be taken down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers: "What is to be gained by killing our brother and concealing his blood? Rather, let us sell him to these Ishmaelites, instead of doing away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh." His brothers agreed. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.

GENESIS 37:3-4,12-13a, 17b-28a

Reflection

Joseph was Israel's son of his old age, the most beloved of all his sons. Israel made for him a long-sleeved tunic of many colors. Joseph's brothers saw the special love Israel had for Joseph and they began to harbor feelings of envy and jealousy in their hearts; in fact, they began to hate their brother and wanted to get rid of him. When the opportunity arose in Dothan, the brothers decided to kill Joseph by throwing him into a cistern. However, Reuben's conscience began to bother him, and he secretly planned to come back later to rescue Joseph. A second plan came from Judah when he realized, "*He is our brother, our own flesh.*" Rather than kill Joseph outright, he thought it better to sell him to some traders in a caravan on their way to Egypt.



For Pondering

Consider with me: let us notice how harboring feelings of envy, jealousy or resentment can lead a person or a group to consider a temptation to violence. Evil can linger at our doorstep, smoldering until we can find an opportunity to act and carry out harm to another. Ignatian spirituality teaches us to notice the thought in the beginning and recognize where it comes from or could lead us, so we can choose to let it go, to “nip it in the bud.” In the narrative, Reuben and Judah had moments of listening to their conscience regarding the fact that Joseph was their own kin, and it would be wrong to kill him.

For Prayer

Psalm 105 reminds us how the Lord worked marvels in the painful situation Joseph suffered at the hands of his brothers when he was sold to the Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt. Joseph, the slave, later became free and saved his own brothers and father in their time of famine. (Genesis 42-45) The beloved son, Joseph, was sent to save his brothers from death. God’s Beloved Son, Jesus, was sent to free us from our sins and bring us into communion with each other, with God and with all creation.

Let us pray the Responsorial Psalm:

Remember the marvels the Lord has done.

*When the Lord called down a famine on the land
And ruined the crop that sustained them,
He sent a man before them,
Joseph, sold as a slave.*

Remember the marvels the Lord has done.

*They had weighed him down with fetters,
And he was bound with chains,
Till his prediction came to pass
And the word of the Lord proved him true.*

Remember the marvels the Lord has done.

*The king sent and released him,
The ruler of the peoples set him free.
He made him lord of his house
And ruler of all his possessions.*

Remember the marvels the Lord has done.

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