

April 4, 2025

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

LET US PUT HIM TO THE TEST

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out what will happen to him. For if the just one be the son of God, he will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes. With revilement and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for according to his own words, God will take care of him.

WISDOM 2:17-20

"We know where he is from. When the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from." So, Jesus cried out in the temple area as he was teaching and said, "You know me and also know where I am from. Yet I did not come on my own, but the one who sent me, whom you do not know, is true. I know him, because I am from him; he sent me." So they tried to arrest him. ...

JOHN 7:27-30

Reflection

In Catholic liturgical tradition we find two great reflective seasons that invite us to probe the power of God's presence among us, as individuals and as Church. The two—Advent and Lent—invite us to deepen our connection to the great manifestations of divine grace in history, the Incarnation and the Resurrection. In Advent, we surrender ourselves to the tender promise of a birth that brings fullness of life to the world. Scripture readings draw us into the mystery that we rediscover each Christmas season. Jesus' birth is our birth to God among us, with intimate trust and hope. Lent brings us to the discovery of life renewed, a freedom reclaimed beyond the weaknesses and blindness that sever us from God's bond. Easter is our rebirth, a Christmas surprise we see in the crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, a rebirth that washes away the ashes of our broken dreams and moral aspirations. Scripture opens our eyes to the painful path, our personal odyssey to Golgotha, that draws us finally to the ultimate grace of Easter and resurrected life. That painful path is etched in our minds in the many readings that manifest duplicity, cynicism, greed, and outright violence.

It may seem counter to the promise of Easter that we journey along such a path. Nonetheless, the realities in which we move daily remind us that our consciences must be assailed, so that we can purify our own inner vision to receive the rebirth that frees us. The Scriptures help us to recognize that our failings as humans have a powerful and lengthy history, even in the historical unfolding of our religious traditions. Though the individual narratives may make us feel squeamish in our reflective walk toward the empty tomb, they remind us that human foibles can never make the crucifixion the final word. God's life will out despite our failings. The author of Wisdom recognizes this dichotomy. The personalities in the Gospels, for a variety of motives, move from doubting curiosity to homicidal malice. None of these impulses ultimately name or control the truth of the Resurrection promise.

As our liturgies move through the waning weeks of Lent, we are invited to acknowledge the breadth of human weakness, but are also assured that the final outcome will be filled with the life-giving promise of God throughout all time.



Jesus
Photo by David C. Robinson

Questions to Ponder

- What is your internal response to the darker side of the readings in Lenten liturgies?
 - How do you see the strength of the Gospel at work in a world that often neglects the values of the Easter promise?
 - What readings in this season do you find the most inspiring in your own walk amidst daily realities, and our Easter future?
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