

March 5, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

PRAYER IN THE FIERY FURNACE

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Today's First Reading

Azariah stood up in the fire and prayed aloud:

"For your name's sake, O Lord, do not deliver us up forever, or make void your covenant.

Do not take away your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham, your beloved, Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one,

To whom you promised to multiply their offspring like the stars of heaven, or the sand on the shore of the sea.

For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins.

We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you.

But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received;

As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs,

So let our sacrifice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.

And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and we pray to you.

Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.

Deliver us by your wonders, and bring glory to your name, O Lord.”

DANIEL 3:25, 34-43

Reflection

Prior to this passage, four Jewish administrators of the province of Babylonia (Azariah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) ignore King Nebuchadnezzar by refusing to worship the golden statue he set up. The punishment of death by fire awaits these young men. This story of the fiery furnace focuses on the importance of worshiping the true God alone (in keeping with the First Commandment). Faced with severe penalties, will the Jewish community hold on to their God and law?

The prayer of these young men confirms their allegiance to the God of their ancestors: “And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you (i.e., are in awe of you) and we pray to you.” They ask of their God: “. . . deal with us in your kindness and great mercy. Deliver us by your wonders and bring glory to your name, O LORD.” They ask God to set them free in general from the dominating King Nebuchadnezzar and specifically from the fiery furnace. In later verses we read that after being thrown into the white hot furnace, the three young men walked about in the flames singing to God and blessing the LORD. This was the “immediate” saving they experienced. After Nebuchadnezzar learned of their being saved from the furnace, he paid more attention to their God! He followed his general mode of operation: “I decree for nations and peoples of every language that whoever blasphemes the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be cut to pieces and his house destroyed. For there is no other God who can rescue like this.” (3:96-97) God has saved the young men not just from the fiery furnace but also from Nebuchadnezzar. Their prayer for salvation was heard.



Flames in Furnace
Photo by Tiago Silveira

For Pondering

- What is the “fiery furnace” in your life right now? Do you have companions with you or is it a solo experience?
 - Speak out loud your prayer to be saved from the burning flames and/or for the person(s) who are responsible for you being in that situation.
 - What are the “wonders of God” you recognize?
-

For Prayer

*Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.*

*Remember that your compassion, O LORD, and your kindness are from of
old.*

In your kindness remember me, because of your goodness, O LORD.

*Good and upright is the LORD; thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice, he teaches the humble his way.*

Show me, guide me and teach me in your way, O LORD. Amen.

PSALM 25:4-9

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

Support CSD



Center for
Spiritual
Development

COMPANIONS ON THE
SACRED JOURNEY



[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.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street, Orange, CA 92868 714-744-3175

[Unsubscribe slongbotham@csjorange.org](mailto:slongbotham@csjorange.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data
Notice](#)

Sent by bythecsd@csjorange.org