

Resources for your News

Sunday, 2 April 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 11:1-45

1. Martha and Mary were people of faith but Jesus led them to an even deeper faith. Who were the people who led you to a deeper faith in Jesus? Remember them and give thanks.
2. Martha and Mary were struggling to come to terms with their bereavement. What has helped you in similar situations?
3. The concern of Jesus is palpable and touching. Recall those who matter to you and to whom you matter. Such love mediates God's love, which surpasses human love with the gift of new life and Easter joy.
4. One can imagine Lazarus as a symbol of people and groups that are written off as dead (sometimes by themselves), and yet through faith come back to life again. Have you had the experience of being revived by faith? Has faith helped to free you from what held you in bondage, or was destructive of your life?

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MUSINGS: A Human Heart

His was a human heart. He liked friends and he found a home and a safe place with them, over the hill and away from the mob. We might picture him there – the talk, the chat, the prayers, the love; meals with other friends who dropped in, times of prayer and silence. The one who can share a laugh, eat a scone, have a drink or a cuppa. The one who'd give a wink at the sign of peace! Not always so serious, even about religion. There's no such thing as a sad saint!

He is a good friend. Friendship gives new spirit.

When life is ending we will give thanks for friends, and regret the way we have drifted from or hurt each other. Real friendship is when another's thoughts and life become at least as important or more important than our own.

So the resurrection and the life is not just for after death. It is for now. We raise each other up in friendship and in love. In that is the grace of the Lord, himself a friend, for when we love, God lives in us.

Picture your friends and those you love and give thanks to God for each of them.

Lord, help me to keep love and friendship alive in my life.

*From Gospel Reflections for Sundays of Year A: Matthew
by Donal Neary SJ Messenger Publications*

Sunday, 9 April 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Matthew 26:14-27:66

The account of the Passion is a vivid story with a variety of characters and much action. To enter into the passage we can read the story slowly and see if we can identify with different characters in the story. Also any one scene within the story can provide us with much food for reflection and prayer. Keep in mind that one of the aims in reflecting on the passage is to discover the good news the story has for us. Here are just a few general pointers for prayer:

1. The identity of Jesus is revealed as the Messiah and the Son of God, not with a display of human power, but as one who was prepared to suffer unto death to show us how our God loves us. How does the Passion story speak to you as a revelation of how God loves you?
2. Jesus gives us an example of patient endurance and faithfulness in suffering. Suffering is something we all encounter. It is not something that anyone likes but sometimes we cope with it better than others. What have you found helps you to cope better with suffering?
3. As you read through the narrative of the Passion where do you find yourself resonating with a character in the action? Is there any message there for you that is life-giving?

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MUSINGS

Humility is above all God's way: God humbles himself to walk with his people, to put up with their infidelity. This is clear when we read the Book of Exodus. How humiliating for the Lord to hear all that grumbling, all those complaints against Moses, but ultimately against him, their Father, who brought them out of slavery and was leading them on the journey through the desert to the land of freedom. This week, Holy Week, which leads us to Easter, we will take this path of Jesus' own humiliation. Only in this way will this week be 'holy' for us too!

Pope Francis

Look at Judas and watch him – fearfully betraying Jesus. Look at Jesus as his heart goes out to the weakness of his disciples. In all sorts of weakness in our lives, the love of God is triumphant. Let him be the strength in your weakness and sinfulness.

Is Judas motivated by anger and disappointment? Had he a different vision of the messianic kingdom than Jesus? Did he resent that Jesus saw through him when he protested at the waste of Mary's costly ointment at the feast? One thing is clear: he refused to accept Jesus as he was. Like us, he didn't see that it is we, not God, who must change.

From Sacred Space for Lent 2017, Messenger Publications

Sunday, 16 April 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 20:1-9

In some ways this gospel is a difficult one for prayer. It only presents a part of the story.

1. The disciples are in a state of shock and suffering from a traumatic loss. Jesus, the one in whom they had placed so much hope, has been murdered and buried. Then, another shock – the body of Jesus is missing. Have you had experiences in which one tragedy or crisis follows quickly after another? What was that like for you? How did you cope? What, or who, sustained you then?
2. Mary and Peter, and possibly others, came and discovered that the tomb was empty. They are left in a state of bewilderment ‘for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.’ Have you been in that kind of situation, faced with events you cannot explain, events which have dashed your hopes in another person, or in God? What has that been like for you?
3. Yet in spite of the lack of explanation, the beloved disciple ‘saw and believed’.
 - Have there been times when others have done something that you could not understand, and which they could not explain at the time and yet you believed that all was not as it seemed? Times when you decided to trust in spite of the evidence?
 - Have there been times when others have shown this kind of faith in you, and all you could say was ‘trust me’?
 - Have there been times in your relationship with God when you have felt that you were faced with an empty tomb and still you believed?

Where have you found life in such experiences?

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MUSINGS: Easter is a Verb

Christians are Easter people. What that means to me is that we are dynamic: always growing, changing, moving, and engaging. Even those of us who cannot be ‘in motion’ physically – because of necessary employment, family responsibilities or health issues – can experience the interior ‘movements’ of the soul. Every day the Risen Christ invites us to move, to allow the breaking open that happens in a heart that is open to God and to all that divine love brings to us. We sense the inner movement, we listen to the voice of the Spirit, we pay attention to even fleeting emotions and responses that can be, in God’s hands, tools for our ongoing creation.’ (Vinita Hampton Wright, from her blog ‘Days of Deepening Friendship’)

Neither Peter nor John come to believe in the Resurrection without enduring confusion and uncertainty. But out of the confusion comes clarity. The empty tomb can only mean that Jesus is truly alive – raised and transformed by the Father. If Jesus is truly risen, then so are we. As we were one with him in his suffering, so are we now one with him in his risen joy. Alleluia!

From Sacred Space for Lent 2017, Messenger Publications

Sunday, 23 April 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 20:19-31

1. ‘Peace be with you’ was the greeting of Jesus on meeting his frightened apostles. Who has come to you bringing peace at times when you were frightened? For whom have you been an agent of peace?
2. Thomas, doubting and questioning, is possibly a person with whom we can identify. What part have doubting and questioning played on your faith journey? How has your faith been strengthened by such moments?
3. Note the way Jesus dealt with Thomas. He did not give out because he doubted. He took him where he was and led him along to see the truth of his resurrection. Who has been that kind of a teacher for you, gently taking you where you were and leading you on to a deeper knowledge of some truth about life? For whom have you been that kind of teacher?
4. ‘Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed’. That requires great trust. Perhaps you have had the experience of being trusted without having had to prove every step along the way. What was it like to be trusted in that way? Who have you been able to trust in a similar manner?

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MUSINGS

Jesus reveals himself with his wounds: his whole body was clean, beautiful and full of light but the wounds were and are still there, and when the Lord comes at the end of the world, we will see his wounds. Before he could believe, Thomas wanted to place his fingers in the wounds. He was stubborn. But that was what the Lord wanted – a stubborn person to make us understand something greater.

Pope Francis

St Thomas the Apostle

‘We do not know ... how can we know the way?’

*Courageous master of the awkward question,
You spoke the words the others dared not say
And cut through their evasion and abstraction.*

O doubting Thomas, father of my faith,

You put your finger on the nub of things:

We cannot love some disembodied wraith,

But flesh and blood must be our king of kings.

Your teaching is to touch, embrace, anoint,

Feel after him and find him in the flesh.

Because he loved your awkward counterpoint,

The Word has heard and granted you your wish.

O place my hand with yours, help me divine

The wounded God whose wounds are healing mine.

Malcolm Guite (From *Sounding the Seasons – Seventy Sonnets for the Christian Year*, Canterbury Press)