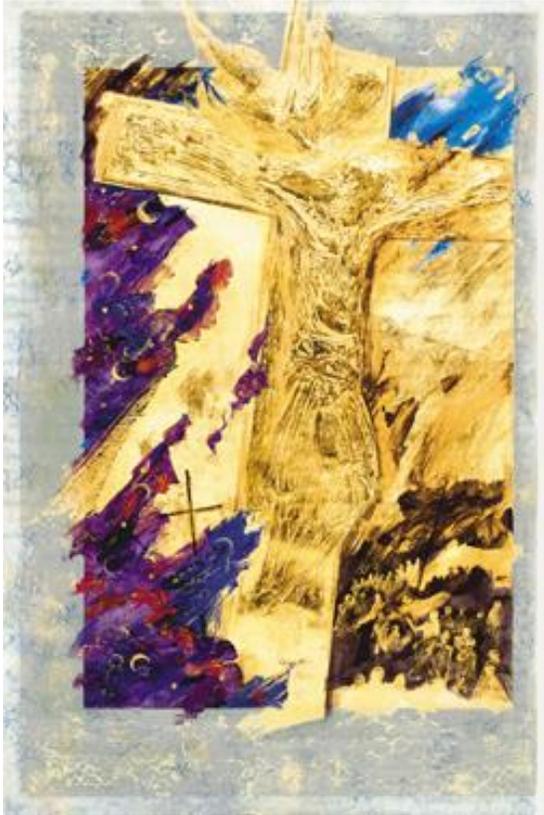


Lenten Reflections

March 27, 2019



The one thing that ran through the readings I was assigned is the reference to laws. Laws and rules – we are surrounded by them. Sometimes we wonder if they are all necessary. Since the beginning of humankind there have been rules that people had to follow or face a punishment. The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve were told not to eat fruit of a certain tree. Was there a real reason for this or was it just a test of obedience? They did not follow the command and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. Thus, began all the trials and tribulations humans face.

The readings I was assigned deals with laws. The Ten Commandments, which were given to Moses, are a list of rules that humans are to follow in order to get into heaven. Interestingly, most of these commands are also laws that people must follow in modern society. All the “thou shall not’s” are laws and while they seem like common sense, they are often ignored by those grasping for power. It is obvious that we should not kill or harm another person or steal something from someone else and while it is okay to have goals and perhaps ambitions to be like someone else or find a partner like someone we may admire, it is not okay if it becomes an obsession.

Yes, laws can be tricky and trying to follow them to the letter is even trickier. Jesus is quoted as saying: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) What I think he meant by that is that all we have was given to us for our good, including laws. By keeping one day as special, humans could rest. Strict adherence to rules should be tempered with common sense.

Luke writes: “Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands – all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.” (Luke 6:37-38) More simply

said – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” (Luke 6:31) This simple rule, one that is taught to children all the time, is often forgotten by adults trying to “succeed” or prove they are the best at something. Striving to do one’s best is a good thing if in the process the striving does not cause harm to others.

Lent is a time of reflection; a time to forgive others for transgressions, real or perceived as well as a time to ask for forgiveness. It is a time of looking forward to growth and new beginnings. As I walked through the snow in my yard this morning, I saw the hope of this new life – three inches of foliage that are the beginning of spring flowers. Yes, daffodils and hyacinth are starting to pop through the earth as they fight through the soil, the snow and the cold to bring hope for what is to come.

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Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent
Lectionary: 239

Reading 1 [Dt 4:1, 5-9](#)

Moses spoke to the people and said:

"Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees
which I am teaching you to observe,
that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land
which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.
Therefore, I teach you the statutes and decrees
as the LORD, my God, has commanded me,
that you may observe them in the land you are entering to occupy.
Observe them carefully,
for thus will you give evidence
of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations,
who will hear of all these statutes and say,
'This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.'
For what great nation is there
that has gods so close to it as the LORD, our God, is to us
whenever we call upon him?
Or what great nation has statutes and decrees
that are as just as this whole law
which I am setting before you today?

"However, take care and be earnestly on your guard
not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen,
nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live,
but teach them to your children and to your children's children."

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20](#)

R. (12a) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion.

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;
he has blessed your children within you.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

He sends forth his command to the earth;
swiftly runs his word!

He spreads snow like wool;
frost he strews like ashes.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.
He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them.

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

Verse Before the Gospel [See Jn 6:63c, 68c](#)

Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life.

Gospel [Mt 5:17-19](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.
I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,
not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter
will pass from the law,
until all things have taken place.

Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments
and teaches others to do so
will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven.

But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments
will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."