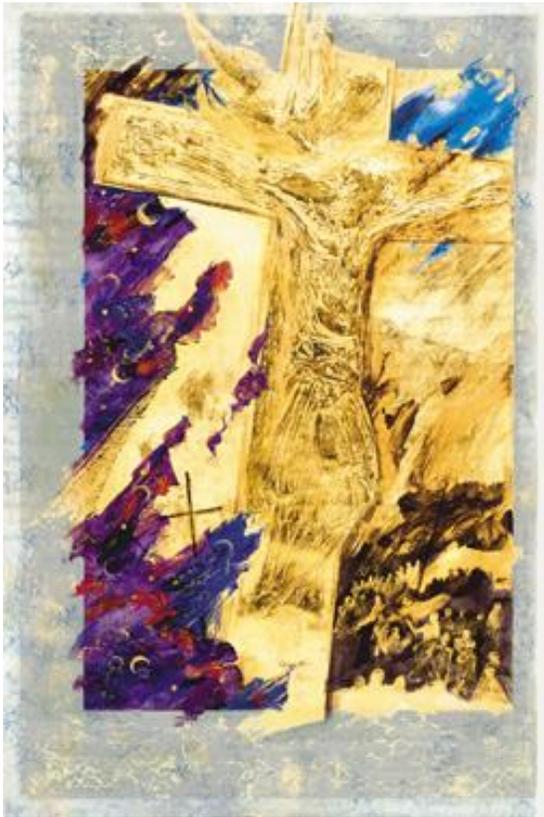


Lenten Reflections

March 28, 2019



In the first reading Jeremiah speaks to the people exhorting them strongly to LISTEN to the voice of the Lord. He continues by saying the Lord promises that if they listen to Him, “you shall be my people and I will be your God.”

Because the Israelites continued to challenge the goodness of the Lord, Jeremiah continues “they have stiffened their necks...” resisting God and His ways...and so “faithfulness has disappeared...the word itself has vanished from their speech.”

How often do we hear it proclaimed “don’t just HEAR, --- LISTEN!”, taking the words to heart and *making them part of our being*. The word **obedience** comes from the Latin “**ab audire**” – to LISTEN. When we listen with our hearts --- our whole being --- we then obey with deep faith what the Lord, by gentle whispers, imparts to us in the depths of our beings...words of love and complete peace -- embracing us with His love and joy...

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of Jesus casting a demon from a mute man. The people not really filled with faith in Jesus, judge Him to be using the power of the pagan god Beelzebul. Jesus makes a powerful and forceful statement: “Whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”

Again we see the power of faithfulness – *of LISTENING with open hearts and minds* to the words the Lord utters in our hearts.

Let us ask ourselves –Do we just HEAR or do we LISTEN? By the witness of our lives do we gather instead of scattering all that God gives us to do to draw others to Himself? Are we able to see the link between LISTENING and FAITHFULNESS? When we are able to make the

connection, maybe then our lives will speak the volumes others need to hear in our example. Maybe then we will have learned to LISTEN.

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**Thursday of the Third Week of Lent
Lectionary: 240**

Reading 1 [Jer 7:23-28](#)

Thus says the LORD:
This is what I commanded my people:
Listen to my voice;
then I will be your God and you shall be my people.
Walk in all the ways that I command you,
so that you may prosper.

But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed.
They walked in the hardness of their evil hearts
and turned their backs, not their faces, to me.
From the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day,
I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets.
Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed;
they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers.
When you speak all these words to them,
they will not listen to you either;
when you call to them, they will not answer you.
Say to them:
This is the nation that does not listen
to the voice of the LORD, its God,
or take correction.
Faithfulness has disappeared;
the word itself is banished from their speech.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9](#)

R. (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,

and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,

as in the day of Massah in the desert,

Where your fathers tempted me;

they tested me though they had seen my works."

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Verse Before the Gospel [Jl 2:12-13](#)

Even now, says the LORD,

return to me with your whole heart,

for I am gracious and merciful.

Gospel [Lk 11:14-23](#)

Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute,

and when the demon had gone out,

the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed.

Some of them said, "By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons,

he drives out demons."

Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven.

But he knew their thoughts and said to them,

"Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste

and house will fall against house.

And if Satan is divided against himself,

how will his kingdom stand?

For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons.

If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul,

by whom do your own people drive them out?

Therefore they will be your judges.

But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons,

then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

When a strong man fully armed guards his palace,

his possessions are safe.

But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him,

he takes away the armor on which he relied

and distributes the spoils.

Whoever is not with me is against me,

and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

