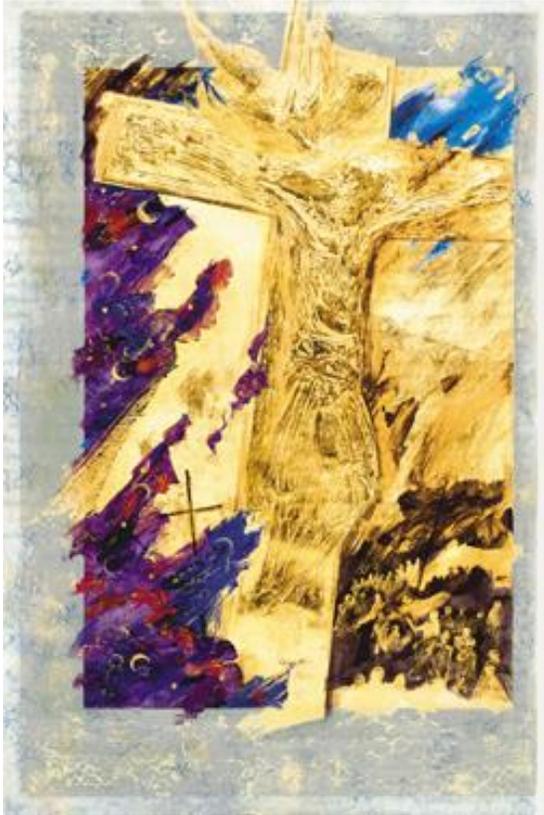


Lenten Reflections

April 12, 2019



Jesus teaches us, "Go and make disciples of all nations, teach them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold, I am with you with always, until the end of time."

Well, the gospel message is very clear. A few short instructions and words of encouragement directed towards his disciples. But how do these words apply to you and I, Christian men, women, and children living 2000 years after the time of Jesus? Think about it, how are we supposed to go and make disciples of all nations when we are not quite sure what that means? After all, we are not like the first disciples with their simple, uncomplicated lifestyles of fishing and farming. We are modern people living in a challenging world where everyone is busy with their issues.

The renowned spiritual teacher Henri Nouwen offers us words of advice that can help us grasp the meaning of Jesus' teachings. In his book *Life of the Beloved*, Nouwen offers words of advice to a friend on what it means to live a meaningful spiritual life in the modern world. Nouwen encourages us to listen to God's words, he says, "You are my beloved - I have called you by name, from the very beginning you are mine and I am yours. I have molded you in the depths of the earth and knitted you together in your mother's womb. I have carved you in the palms of my hands with infinite care and tenderness. I have counted every hair on your head. I will not hide my face from you. I am your father, your mother, your brother and sister. Nothing will ever separate us. I will love till the end of time."

I believe that these words, the promise repeated by Jesus in the gospels can help us to understand what it means to be a disciple. Being a disciple does not mean that we are asked to work miracles or to be perfect. I believe living as a disciple means doing our best, with our unique gifts and talents to live as Jesus teaches through his word and example.

Consider the ways we are encouraged to live wherever life takes us:

- Respect and care for all creation with wisdom and love, keeping in mind that for God only has us to live and spread the good news.
- Be an instrument of peace and social justice.
- Live with a compassionate heart treating every human being as a unique child of God.
- Listen and speak with respect and openness to the voices of others.
- Practice forgiveness and mercy, even when it is difficult.
- Celebrate life in all its beauty, mystery and diversity.
- Love one another as God loves us.
- Live with a grateful and joyful heart
- Take time to pause, pray and reflect on the reality that we are God's beloved.
- Encourage one another in good times and hardship.

If we can live as faith-filled disciples, we are living the truth that we are all children of God. We are called to live as Jesus shows us with mercy, forgiveness and compassion towards all people and creation not just during Lent, but every day as Disciples of Christ.

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Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent
Lectionary: 255

Reading 1 [Jer 20:10-13](#)

I hear the whisperings of many:
"Terror on every side!
Denounce! let us denounce him!"
All those who were my friends
are on the watch for any misstep of mine.
"Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail,
and take our vengeance on him."
But the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion:
my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.
In their failure they will be put to utter shame,
to lasting, unforgettable confusion.
O LORD of hosts, you who test the just,
who probe mind and heart,
Let me witness the vengeance you take on them,
for to you I have entrusted my cause.
Sing to the LORD,
praise the LORD,
For he has rescued the life of the poor
from the power of the wicked!

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 18:2-3a, 3bc-4, 5-6, 7](#)

R. (see 7) **In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.**

I love you, O LORD, my strength,
O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.

R. **In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.**

My God, my rock of refuge,
my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!
Praised be the LORD, I exclaim,
and I am safe from my enemies.

R. **In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.**

The breakers of death surged round about me,
the destroying floods overwhelmed me;
The cords of the nether world enmeshed me,
the snares of death overtook me.

R. **In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.**

In my distress I called upon the LORD
and cried out to my God;
From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry to him reached his ears.

R. **In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice.**

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

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

Gospel [Jn 10:31-42](#)

The Jews picked up rocks to stone Jesus.
Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father.
For which of these are you trying to stone me?"
The Jews answered him,
"We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy.
You, a man, are making yourself God."
Jesus answered them,
"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, 'You are gods'?"
If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came,
and Scripture cannot be set aside,
can you say that the one
whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world
blasphemes because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?
If I do not perform my Father's works, do not believe me;
but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me,
believe the works, so that you may realize and understand
that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."
Then they tried again to arrest him;
but he escaped from their power.

He went back across the Jordan

to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained.
Many came to him and said,
"John performed no sign,
but everything John said about this man was true."
And many there began to believe in him.