**Lent 4 B Laudete Sunday** **Lectionary Catechesis**

**Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS and Joan Blossom**

**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

|  |
| --- |
| The anointed one, foretold in Cyrus according to Isaiah, and fulfilled in Jesus Christ comes to save us through the trial of baptism, death to sin and an assent to God’s grace in the resurrection. The readings are about lamentation for the effects of sin; this is what Pope Francis means by a renewal of compunction, the gift of tears. For Paul, this is framed In the context of God’s mercy and grace, whenever God acts in our human history. Lent deepens our awareness of this grace and mercy, to which we respond as faithful disciples and even children by adoption. This unfolds the joy of this Laudete Sunday. |

**FIRST READING: II Chronicles 36, 14-16. 19-23**

The very end of the Books of Chronicles, the readings succinctly captures the theology of the writer. The people broke the covenant, God sent prophets to call for conversion, the people failed to listen, their culture was conquered and collapsed (587/6 BC under Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon when Zedekiah was the last king of Judah), and at long last, the God who acts in history, rescues them but through the unexpected hand of a foreign ruler, Cyrus II the Great of Persia (560 c.-530 BC). The missing two verses describe the slaughter of the people of Jerusalem and the theft of the sacred vessels of the Temple. The passage takes in the sweeping events from 587 to 530 BC.

**Vs. 21: CCC 2172** This citation comments on the 3rd Commandment, the Sabbath rest as a necessary imitation of God’s own rest at the end of His creation. Sabbath provides a “respite” from work. “It is a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money.”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you think about the teaching in CCC 2172, the Sabbath as protest?  Why does God act in our human history? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share the way you see God acting in your life when you consider the bigger overall picture.  How do you keep the Sabbath, the Sunday as a day of rest? What does this rest mean to you? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Who are the messenger prophets whom God sends still today to call us to conversion?  Why are the prophets never welcomed by people, but rather abused? |
| **WORSHIP** | Part of the holiness of the Sabbath is worship of God.  What does vs. 21 mean about “retrieve all its lost Sabbaths”? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 137, 1-2. 3. 4-5. 6**

This is the classic lamentation of an exiled people: “By the rivers of Babylon / there we sat weeping / when we remembered Zion.” One can feel the deepest of emotions in these opening verses expressing the loss of a whole people. The last part of the psalm, which is not used in the responsorial, expresses the anger in the most graphic way possible, which horrifies us as some thought that would arise in prayer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What does the Church teach about immigrants, exiles, refugees?  Pope Francis has asked us this Lent for compunction. What is this? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What experiences in your life bring you to tears?  What are the losses in your life that you remember in the way this psalmist remembers Jerusalem? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Identify the immigrants, exiles, refugees of our modern world.  Connect the emotions of lamentation to the holy season of Lent. |
| **WORSHIP** | What part of the Mass resembles this kind of lamentation and why?  The people could not sing because of their great sadness and loss. Why don’t Catholics sing? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 2, 4-10**

Here St. Paul almost seems to conflate the grace of God with the mercy of God, both given by God for our benefit. God is like this for us because God created us in love, his handiwork. Vss. 5-6 summarizes the promise of the core *kerygma*. Grace is a gift on account of faith. Vs. 10 explains that the good works we do have been created themselves by God and given to us that we might discern them and do them out of faith and in the strength of grace. This passage is the set up for his great spirituality of reconciliation which immediately follows. Reconciliation is the great work God has created for us to do. The connections in this whole passage altogether creates our Lenten spirituality. That we should attend to this work of reconciliation is a cause for the joy that results whenever reconciliation occurs.

**Vss. 4-5: CCC 654** The Pascal Mystery brings together two essential elements: the death and resurrection of Jesus. The justification of God for us is death conquered and a new life in grace in the resurrection. We become adopted brethren of Christ by the gift of grace. We share in both death and resurrection ourselves.

**Vs. 4: CCC 211, 1073** First is a comment on the opening of the Creed about God. At the center of the meaning of “I AM” is faithfulness and mercy. So, God sends His Son to us who broke the covenant. The liturgy participates in the prayer of Jesus and the Father; the liturgical prayer gives all prayer “its source and goal.” The inner person is rooted and grounded in the liturgy.

**Vs. 6: CCC 1003, 2796** The promise of Baptismal life with God in heaven is for now “hidden” in mystery. Having died with Christ in baptism, we live and are sustained in Christ in the Eucharist, and so already share in Christ’s life. When we arise, “we will then appear with Christ in glory.”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Explain the spiritual connection of death and resurrection as the Pascal Mystery.  Explain the relationship of grace and works. |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Rooted and grounded in the liturgy, how does reconciliation flow from your Sunday participation?  Share the good work God created for you to do in your life. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How does God’s grace call you to be rich in mercy toward “your brother?”  What is the “work” God has given to your parish as its mission to do in your view? |
| **WORSHIP** | How does the Eucharist show up in your family life and in your work?  Personal prayer reflects and grows out of the Liturgical prayer. Share how this works for you. |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: John 3, 14-21 The Night Encounter with Nicodemus**

John 3, 1-21 tells the midnight encounter of the Pharisee Nicodemus and Jesus. In the course of the meeting Nicodemus asks four brief questions, three about the effects of baptism. Jesus provides a lengthy almost homily like response. The passage is Jesus’ closing remarks, including the famous, “God so loved the world . . . ” passage. The disciple, called out of God’s love, commits to Jesus and lives in the light. Note that the works done by the disciple are related to Paul’s comment in the second reading about the work we do itself is a gift from God. When we discern this work, our joy is overflowing and abundant. Jesus will leave Nicodemus and openly begin to baptize even while the Baptist is still at work baptizing. He does this openly and in the light.

**Vss. 14-15: CCC 2130** Even in the Old Testament God permits the making of images. Numbers 21, 4-7

**Vs. 16: CCC 219, 444, 454, 458, 706** At baptism and transfiguration, the voice from heaven proclaims Jesus as the Son of God the Father. Here in John 3, 16 Jesus calls himself the Son of God; this is the only instance he does this. Abraham is promised many children who will all be ingathered according to God’s promise through Jesus Christ who guarantees this promise until we inherit it.

**Vs. 17: CCC 679** Christ is Lord and judge of all because of the Cross, yet his judgment is that all should have eternal life and be saved. A person condemns himself when he rejects this grace from God.

**Vs. 18: CCC 444, 454, 679** For these references see just above.

**Vss. 20-21: CCC 678** Jesus announces a judgment in his teaching. Our attitude toward our neighbor will be the litmus test of that judgment. Our acceptance of grace is tested in our actions toward our neighbor.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the work that Jesus comes to do?  Connect the teaching of Jesus about baptism and judgment. |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you think is the work God has created you to do? What is your vocation?  Tell the story of how and when you came to believe in Jesus Christ. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What is the best response to share when people ask about the various kinds of art in a Catholic church building or home?  As you read this midnight encounter, relate its teachings to evangelization. |
| **WORSHIP** | Do Catholics worship images? Then explain our use of them at home and in church.  Explain how the baptismal light is relevant to the teaching in this story. |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Lent 5 B: Jeremiah 31, 31-34; Ps 51; Hebrews 5, 7-9; John 12, 20-33**