

Sunday, July 7, 2019.

Morning. Let us get down to the truth that yes at times we are labored and burdened. Life does weigh heavily on us from time to time. We are in need of rest both spiritually and figuratively.

Afternoon. Jesus offers us an invitation. Let us respond by admitting what he asks us to admit, not because we are whiners and complainers, but because he simply does not want to fight us.

Evening. Jesus is God. He could break through our defenses and our boasting of being strong and powerful. But he chooses to wait – he himself stated that he is “Meek and humble of heart.” He will wait, and wait, and wait, until finally we come around and admit our need for his rest and his yoke. A yoke that is easy. A burden that is light. Rest.

Monday July 8, 2019.

Morning. Our country. The homeland. Yesterday’s first reading showed the love and praise that the people of Israel have for Jerusalem. “Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her.” “Lo, I will spread prosperity over Jerusalem like a river.” “In Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.”

Afternoon. As they did thousands of years ago, so do we today, with the memory of our recent Fourth of July celebration fresh in our minds, love our country. Whenever we join in the celebration of our nation’s independence and enjoy the freedoms that we have, let us also remember those who had gone before us. Each played a role in establishing and protecting our freedom, as well as those who presently defend our freedom.

Evening. Now, on to the other readings of yesterday’s Mass. Jesus says, “Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you... Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, ‘The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.’”

Tuesday, July 9, 2019.

Morning. If we could only take these words to heart and live them out. But we are sensitive. It does not take much of a slight for us to be sent into a tailspin. We long for a welcoming greeting. Our young ones getting on the bus hope to hear, “hey, how’s it going” “what’s up, man” from the other children. For those of us who have graduated from school, we expect to be welcomed and appreciated by our co-workers.

Afternoon. For those of us who belong to any kind of social club or organization, we expect to be welcomed as we enter into their company. Through our years, we hope to be welcomed and appreciated. How many of us are estranged from our own family, slighted by friends, frozen out in the workplace, shunned in social situations? And how do we react?

Evening. When rejected, do we have a psychological and emotional meltdown? Do we curl up and die altogether? Do we retaliate? Do we take it on the chin and walk away and kick the proverbial dog when we get home, or worse take it out on our loved ones? Do we go beyond reaction and into action, whereby we formulate a plan to better ourselves with the hope of impressing that person or group of people who had rejected us? Jesus calls us to react to rejection by simply shaking the dust from our feet as we walk away.

Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Morning. The psychologists would tell me (or you) that when I experience a slight or insult, what governs my reaction is determined by how much power I give to others. If I give them the power to determine my self-worth, then if they slight me or insult me, then I will be crushed. And when crushed, I may curl up and die, or I may strike out. In either case, I am admitting that this person or group of people has the power to determine my self-worth.

Afternoon. When I look to God for my self-worth, then I can easily shake the dust from my feet and walk away from a slight or insult. Let our prayers, our devotions, our personal sacrifices that flow from our being Christians, and all of the holy things have an effect in our lives, lead us to find our meaning and self-worth in God.

Evening. We are no longer in need of the praise and acceptance of those who slight or insult us. We have already found our self-worth in the Lord. We are free to walk away from those who insult and slight us and spend our time and attention giving our love to those who do welcome and include us. They are the ones who are deserving of our thought and time and attention.

Thursday, July 11, 2019.

Morning. Today's calendar gives us St Benedict. Living a few hundred years after Jesus ascended up into heaven, he developed a rule of life to assist those who devote themselves to monastic life in their quest to grow in holiness. For the past 1500 years monks and nuns have followed his way of life in prayer, study, work and living in community with other like-minded lovers of God.

Afternoon. Up to seven times a day, 365 days a year, monks and nuns gather to sing the psalms in prayer. They spend other times of the day in private, sacred reading. The rest of their waking hours are spent working in an effort to support the monastery. An example is the Trappist monks of Spencer, Massachusetts, who make jellies and jams.

Evening. In Benedictine prayer, monks and nuns are emptied of thoughts and intellectual striving, so that they may be filled with God's grace. Goodness is free to bubble up in their hearts, first with an inspiration or two, and finally overflowing with contemplative love.

Friday, July 12, 2019.

Morning. Let us take this moment of meditation to abandon ourselves to God in imitation of the monks who do all 24-7-365. Let us forget about devoting any precious thoughts, time, and attention to those who slight and exclude us with the hope that one day, if we complete our self-improvement program, they will accept and approve of us.

Afternoon. Let us live out Jesus' call of this past Sunday's Gospel. Simply walk away from those who insult and slight us and shake the dust from our feet. Let us devote our thought and time and attention to those who accept us and love us.

Evening. Let us be faithful to our prayers and devotions that keep us close to God, in whom we find our self-worth.

Saturday, July 13, 2019.

Morning. In anticipation of tomorrow's mass readings, let us give some thought to Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. A fellow is in desperate need. He has just been mugged by robbers and as the gospel reading says, he is left half-dead. A priest comes upon him and

immediately crosses the street to the other side and passes by as quickly as possible. Not only does he not offer to help this man, but he wanted to get as far away from him as possible.

Afternoon. How crazy is that! A priest, who is committed to following the Law of God, should help somebody who is in need. But wait a minute! In the Bible, it says that one is to avoid contact with someone who is bleeding or else he will become unclean and would thereby be unfit for religious service and not be allowed to serve at the altar.

Evening. Jesus has intentionally set up this problem. According to the early Old Testament books of the Bible, the priest followed the letter of the law and stayed clear of the bleeding man who was in need. This idea is retold today in *Les Misérables*, where Javert follows the letter of the law. He shows no compassion whatsoever in his implementation of the law.

Sunday. July 14, 2019.

Morning. Whereas, in *Les Misérables*, John Valjean, shows compassion for others and is willing to help them even if it puts him in a compromising situation. Similarly in Jesus' Gospel story of 2,000 years ago, the priest (as would Javert) shows no compassion in living out the letter of the Law. But the good Samaritan (as would John Valjean) is willing to compromise himself and become unclean out of compassion for this man who was bleeding and half dead.

Afternoon. Today's Gospel reads, "he was moved with compassion at the sight of the man... he approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds. Then he lifted him up and took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'"

Evening. No doubt about it, this man – the good Samaritan — acted with great compassion. But, also let us not forget, he broke the law of God. He did not follow but rather disobeyed what it says early on in the Bible, about not coming into contact with somebody who is bleeding.