

Sunday, March 31, 2019. Morning. Let us identify ourselves with the younger or Prodigal son in today's Gospel reading. Yes, Lent is a time of repentance, but we are offered today to step back and take a breath and Rejoice. Yes, God will forgive us of our sins. Yes, we will be welcomed back as guests at a feast that celebrates our return.

Afternoon. It is going to take some effort on our part to fully rejoice in such a welcome. Along with the Prodigal son, I am tempted to say, "I no longer deserve... treat me as you would one of the workers..." But, no, the Father has the final word. And he says we should be dressed in the finest robe with a ring on our finger.

Evening. As we hear in today's Gospel reading. "Then the celebration began." So let us rejoice.

Monday April 1, 2019. Morning. Monday morning and the start of a new month and the beginning of the fourth week of Lent bring us back down to earth, from the enjoyment of yesterday's call to rejoice. Let us spend some time considering the sadness that is our separation from God.

Afternoon. Yesterday's Gospel reading does not conclude with the joy of the Prodigal son's return. Rather it focuses on the sadness that is the separation that the older son has from his father. Were there ever times that we felt separated from God the Father?

Evening. The elder son's separation from God was self-inflicted. "He was angry and refused to go into the feast." It is going to be a long journey for him to get to the point that he is happy that his brother is forgiven. Do we ever find ourselves angry because God did not punish our brother or sister? Do we ever find ourselves separating ourselves from God because God forgave our brother or sister?

Tuesday, April 2, 2019. Morning. It is a long journey for the elder son to get to a point where he will rejoice in the fact that the father welcomes his brother back with open arms. But it is a journey he does not need to make alone. The father goes out and pleads with the elder son, and so will God make every effort to reach out to us and overcome any separation that we have put between ourselves and God.

Afternoon. The father chooses to share all with the elder son. "You are here with me always... all I have is yours." So let us hear these words from God the Father offering to overcome anything that separates ourselves from him.

Evening. The final request is not addressed to the Prodigal Son but rather to the elder son. "Let us celebrate and rejoice that your brother has returned from his life of sin." So is the call for us to thank God not only for forgiving us of our sins, but also for forgiving our brothers and sisters of their sins.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019. Morning. Let us resume our consideration of sin, with the eighth commandment. The strongest bond of any human relationship is that of honesty. Conversely, any human relationship based on deceit is bound to fall apart. Let us avoid lying, so that our relationships may be solidly founded on truth.

Afternoon. The temptation is always there to lie: to avoid admitting blame, to avoid disappointing another. Whenever we feel like we are losing control, the temptation is always there to attempt to manipulate another through deception and thereby gain the upper hand. It is not easy to admit that at times I am guilty.

Evening. It is not easy to admit that I want to please everybody and this desire might tempt me to lie, in order to have others think better of me. It is not always easy to resist the temptation to manipulate and deceive another. But in the end basing our human interaction on truth rather than lies and deception will lead to solid human relationships that endure the test of time.

Thursday, April 4, 2019. Morning. Covet. To desire greedily. Any other concept is only given one commandment. But Covet gets two commandments, a full 20% of the commandments. And it gets the final word. For long after we are free from being in actual danger of stealing, or long after we are in actual danger of risking our own marriage or putting pressure on the marriage of another, the thought to do so may still occur to us.

Afternoon. We are complex beings with many layers. The first half of our journey is to free ourselves from committing the act of stealing. The second half of our journey is allowing ourselves to be transformed by God's grace so that we no longer covet — or desire greedily — that which belongs to another.

Evening. Lent is a penitential time. Let us look to the ten commandments as a guide for examining our conscience so that when we do go to the sacrament of reconciliation we can properly confess our sins.

Friday, April 5, 2019. Morning. Good Friday is a short two weeks away. Let each Friday be a mini- Good Friday, in which we are mindful that Jesus suffered and died on the Cross for our salvation.

Afternoon. The suffering and death Jesus — because he was/is God and because he was called to suffer and die by his Father — had/has the power to forgive sins. Our own suffering and eventual death can have power when it is aligned to that of Jesus.

Evening. In addition to our carrying out our Lenten observance, let us also take all of our suffering past and present and align it with that of Jesus.

Saturday. April 6, 2019. Morning. In tomorrow's Gospel reading, we have a very troubling Gospel reading, for many reasons. The scribes and Pharisees have a chance for a face to face encounter to Jesus. And do they make the most of this opportunity? No, not at all. Rather they accuse another of sin. If we were granted only one face to face encounter with Jesus would we use the opportunity to praise Jesus, to thank Jesus, to pray for world peace, for an end to all natural disasters, for an end to all illnesses and tragedies... or would we imitate those in the Gospel who spend this golden opportunity in attempting to point out the faults of another?

Afternoon. In tomorrow's Gospel reading, why do the scribes and Pharisees point out the sin of another — in particular the sin of a woman caught in adultery? Not so that she can be forgiven and begin a new life free from sin, but rather so that they can trap Jesus and bring a charge against Jesus. If we find ourselves focusing on the sin of another, let us examine our intention.

Is it for the good of the other person... for the sake of their forgiveness? Or do we have another sinister motive in doing so?

Evening. Let us be particularly mindful of gender as represented in tomorrow's Gospel reading. A group of *males* bring accusations against a *female* for an act that she did not commit alone, but with a *male*. Why is she alone singled out for the sin? Why is not the man with whom she committed the sin also accused? If we ever find ourselves as part of a homogeneous group (whether of nationality or race or religion or gender or age or otherwise) singling out someone who is not of our group and accusing them, let us step back and be mindful of what we are doing.