

Saturday 2/27/10 Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord! Dt 26:16-19 Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8 Mt 5:43-48

And so, in a sense, today we make full circle. The power and intimacy of that third special person in a relationship is so awesome. Teaching, guiding, correcting, leading, always loving both passionately, and loving them together, making them into one. Life in the Spirit is the process of gradually coming to know Him. The knowledge comes step by step, and day by day. It comes in consolation and in desolation. It comes in conversation and in prayer. The certainty of His presence is the real reality of life, life in the Spirit. It is what, and it is really the only what, that makes us perfect. Catherine Doherty says, " The most profound dialog is between two crucified persons." It is only on that cross that a relationship is brought to perfection.

Friday 2/26/10 If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, who can stand? Ez 18:21-28 Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8 Mt 5:20-26

Well I see that it is time to ask my friends, if I have any left, to take up a collection. I'm down to my last penny and the debt is still so great! It is impossible for me to pay. After all here I am in chains. I am too old to get a job even if I get out of this jail! Poor, poor, pitiful me! I am so in need of a Savior. Don't I have at least one friend left who will help me. Open my eyes, Lord! Help me to see my own wickedness. It is the only way I can know how much I need you.

Thursday 2/25/10 Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me. Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25 Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8 Mt 7:7-12

Poor Jesus!!! You have such a high opinion of us! Don't you know how much cheaper stones are than bread! We are a people very content to give away stones, but let go of a little of that bread? No way. We will hang on firmly to that bread, right down to the bitter end. Perhaps that is why the end is so often so bitter. And as for asking, seeking, and knocking! My knuckles are bloody, but I still haven't won the lottery. What are you talking about? I ask you for patience and You give me trials. I ask for wisdom and You give me problems to solve. I ask you to change this one's heart, and all in the world You do is keep pointing out all my sins and telling me to wash the guy's feet!!! Isn't there an easier god somewhere?

Wednesday 2/24/10 A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn. Jon 3:1-10 Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19 Lk 11:29-32

Sometimes we just simply run up against the smallness of language, our inability to express the profound. Any way you read it, any translation I can find Jonah 3:10 presents a problem, or is it? God repented? God relented? God changed His mind? God revoked His sentence? Bottom line: The bad

people turned and so did God. People have the power to cause God to turn? Wow, maybe we do. Maybe prayer is real. Maybe we really can make a difference. Well, I say let's give it a try. What do we have to lose! Maybe it is a secret of His perfect will, that it can be changed!

PS: Sometimes (I should say very often) I am just way in over my head.

Tuesday 2/23/10 From all their distress God rescues the just. Is 55:10-11 Ps 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19 Mt 6:7-15

Why is forgiving so important? Or is it? Seventy times seven? Shoot, I can't even get out two or three most of the time. I'd much rather heal somebody, or get in a nice word of prophesy, or spend a few hours with the Blessed Sacrament. Why does He want me to forgive? I was right!!! They wronged me!!! They should be apologizing to me! You know...there is a reason, a very simple reason. It is right there in the word itself, forgive. Everything else I do is really Him at work. It is using the gifts He is giving me for others. The only really God-like thing I can do is forgive another. By hurting me they have given me a tremendous power over them. It was in yesterday's gospel. What I bind is bound, what I loose is loosed. I have had quite a bit of experience in this matter. I do not know about the heaven and hell part afterward, but here in this world I can choose to make things heavenly or extremely hellish, simply by forgiving or not doing so. It is completely up to me! Give forgiveness, generously!

Monday 2/22/10 The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. 1 Pt 5:1-4 Ps 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6 Mt 16:13-19

We are in a battle. Look around, People are dying out there! There is only one general in our army, only one. We are all private soldiers. We all report directly to Him. We have only one command, "Love me and each other!" His "orders" are very, very plain. Here it is. "Watch carefully what I am doing and help out wherever you can." That is it. That is His battle plan, His war strategy. Of course, what He is doing is loving everyone and every thing all the time. So let us quit trying to tell others what they can or can't, or should or could do. Just keep pointing to Jesus, the "Son of the Living God" and do what little we can to help each other "Do what He tells us!".

PS: Do not get worried or up-tight. The battle may not be quite over yet, but He already won the war. Just hang on and help get the news out to everybody so we can all put down these weapons!

Friday 2/19/10 A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn. Is 58:1-9a Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19 Mt 9:14-15

Who is the King of Glory? He is the Lord of the fast. His will is plain to see, though sometimes it is hard to see over a stack of pancakes! Our Father is not a vain-glorious seeker of pomp. He is the passionate crusader against injustice. He is the ever vigilant champion of the oppressed. So go fast. Go very fast to His side and lend a hand. You will find Him hard at work wherever people are bound by selfishness and sin.

Thursday 2/18/10 Blessed are they who hope in the Lord. Dt 30:15-20 Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 Lk 9:22-25

It is perfectly acceptable to turn your back on Jesus, so long as it is to allow yourself to be nailed to the other side of His cross.

Wednesday 2/17/10 Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned. Jl 2:12-18 Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17 2 Cor 5:20—6:2 Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Now is the time. Now is always the time. There is no time to put things off. There is no time to waste. Now is the time to live, and He is life itself. Do what He tells you, all the time. Then you will be alive. Then you will no longer dwell in the past, or fret the future. Then you will live. Live and walk in His light, and you will live full of His incomparable joy.

Tuesday 2/16/10 Blessed the man you instruct, O Lord. Jas 1:12-18 Ps 94:12-13a, 14-15, 18-19 Mk 8:14-21

Thirteen hungry men in a boat out on the lake, quite an intimate setting, and only one little loaf of bread. One might imagine what occupied most of their minds. What a teachable moment. What is the "leaven" of the Pharisees, the wielders of religious power, or the leaven of Herod, the ultimate political power. What an opportunity for a lesson on fasting, or perhaps sharing, or even another "multiplication" miracle, but no. All His dearest friends get is an inscrutable, seemingly off hand, out of the blue, admonition to guard against the two things in their lives that they have absolutely no power over, the certainty of death and taxes personified! Could that be the message? And here we are today. How wise He is. He is personified wisdom. Several billion passengers on this small lifeboat of a planet in the vastness of the cosmos, His cosmos, fretting, worrying, and waging war after war over the silliest misunderstandings of what religious and political power are and are for. So what must I do. Well, wake up! "guard against the leaven". All those little seeds of rule making and control in my heart are the only thing in the way of the operation of His amazing miraculous power that is love. Unless I am ready to love each and every other He brings into my life, I still do not understand.

Monday 2/15/10 Be kind to me, Lord, and I shall live. Jas 1:1-11 Ps 119:67, 68, 71, 72, 75, 76 Mk 8:11-13

Have faith, it is the most curious of human virtues. It is a pure gift, and no effort can ever suffice to attain it, yet it alone is our most fundamental need. Faith is like a great ocean. It is always there. Its effects, even if they touch us only through others, are powerful and always at work in our lives. It is the spiritual "weather maker" of our lives. It is so huge and so powerful that it does inspire fear in us at times. We are so very often content to dabble and play and wade around its edges. It is only when something inside us finally unlocks our hearts and we can begin to yield to its attraction that we can go out onto and into the deep to explore its wonders and its awesome power. Yes His signs are visible. They are around us, in us, all over us, but it is only through the eyes of faith that they come into view, and as we view them they become clearer and more beautiful in our sight. We become more and more immersed in the faith.

Saturday 2/13/10 Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people. 1 Kgs12:26-32; 13:33-34 s 106:6-7ab, 19-20, 21-22 Mk 8:1-10

The greatest mystery in life is why we so easily turn away. It is because our God is so very good that we do it. A stern master may be despised but His wishes are always followed carefully, even when most poorly understood. The effect of the cudgel is so very obvious! Those in its shadow are cowed and beaten down. Perhaps outwardly respectful, inside they seethe with destructive feelings of fear and resentment. On the other hand the only valid response to the kind and gentle master is love, admiration, and gratitude. Though they are slow in coming these attitudes are creative and life giving. Their affects spill over to many, many others. Fear of the Lord may be the beginning of wisdom, but love is its culmination.

Friday 2/12/10 I am the Lord, your God: hear my voice. 1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19 Ps 81:10-11ab, 12-13, 14-15 Mk 7:31-37

Hooray, another short lesson in "Bible Math" !!! $12-10=1$. Any knucklehead who says "God said it. I believe it, That settles it." needs to buy eggs from me, I am guaranteed to make at least a 8.5% profit! Although knowing me it would all end up on my wasteline! What does it mean??? When Jesus sailed off to be alone he ran upon the demoniac full of thousands of demons. Of course He exorcised and delivered the guy (at the cost of thousands of pork chops!!!) and sent him off to announce the wonderful news to all the people in the Decopolis. When the guy does as Jesus bade him and later Jesus arrives in town, everybody and his brother want a piece of the action. So now Jesus drags off this poor deaf mute, opens his ears, looses his tongue, and promptly orders him to keep his mouth shut!!! Go figure!!! What is Jesus thinking???

Well, of course, you know I have an idea. After the Geraserea incident Jesus was so busy dealing with the aftermath of the loss of all those hogs (nobody wanted Him around anymore) He had to send the guy off. By instructing him to tell everybody in the Decapolis, Jesus was sending him out like the Father sent John to pave the way and open a few doors, sort of like Jesus' advance man. Once Jesus arrives in 10-towns, it is time for the advance men to move on. Jesus is there, up close, personal, doing His thing. There is no need for a bunch of newly saved to wander around jumping and dancing and distracting the folks, Jesus is here. He is the One, the one who does all the work.

Is there a practical application for this theory today? I think so. If you have been healed (and if you have not, you are most likely not reading this silly scribbling), go where He ain't (where people's hearts are not open to Him, as He really is everywhere) to talk about Him. Do not talk about what you think He can, or will do, or shoulda, coulda, woulda, done. Just simply, clearly, and humbly announce what He has done for you. When He comes their hearts will be just a little more open. Just love, He will do all the rest!

Now, if you disagree with this, I'd love to hear your take on it. If not, there is probably something a little wrong with your thinking, you will certainly be in the minority!

Thursday 2/11/10 Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people. 1 Kgs 11:4-13 Ps 106:3-4, 35-36, 37 and 40 Mk 7:24-30

This world's idols can be so very tempting. Their followers are so very numerous and so pervasive in our culture. They call to us constantly and appear to offer all we desire. How often we are so very late in discovering that their allure is only skin deep. How is one to know what is of God? The fullness of the things of this world's idols never satisfy, but even the scraps of God's grace, the left overs that His followers drop, are full of power and abundant life. As the psalmist says, dine at His table and only goodness and kindness follow, all the days of your life.

Wednesday 2/10/10 The mouth of the just murmurs wisdom. 1 Kgs 10:1-10 Ps 37:5-6, 30-31, 39-40 Mk 7:14-23

There are a great many hazards in the pathway of life in the Spirit, but the greatest one for the pilgrim on it is the wonderful, overflowing, amazing abundance of God's grace. Those who walk this pathway are so often channels of His love. Those who receive, it far too often, are ready to praise the purveyor rather than the author of His Grace. And far too often such praise becomes a seed of pride in the heart of the pilgrim. Do not worry about the pilgrim. God surely will find ways to humble him. Weep, rather, for all those who will miss out on His Grace while the pilgrim is being humbled. Jesus is

so right, and sometimes I wonder if the writers really get it. Everything, including praise and adulation, that is received and allowed to pass right through is harmless. It is when it lodges in our hearts, and it can be anything served up to us from praise to insult to injury, and we take it to heart that we are in trouble. Praise can so easily feed pride and arrogance. Insult can feed hatred and jealousy. Injury can feed anger and recrimination. The list goes on and on. So whatever is coming in from outside, just consider the source and let it go. Nourish the good that comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in the holy of holies that is your very soul, and let what comes from Him go out to bless everyone you meet.

Tuesday 2/9/10 How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, mighty God! 1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30 Ps 84:3, 4, 5 Mk 7:1-13 and 10, 11

Life in the Spirit is all about knowing where you are. Simply put, you dwell in the temple of the Lord, the Almighty. There is nowhere you can go to avoid Him. You may ignore Him, abuse Him, distrust Him, run from Him, but, try as you will, you can not avoid Him. He is. That is all you need to understand. He is. Believe it!

Monday 2/8/10 Lord, go up to the place of your rest! 1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13 Ps 132:6-7, 8-10 Mk 6:53-56

We must always go out with Him. We must go where He leads us, where He calls us to go. We do not have to worry, or plot big plans. We just need to go and be there. When we do, when we go with Him they will see Him and bring all those who need Him, and those who reach out will be healed. The cloudy dark "holy of holies" is ancient history. He is here.

Saturday 2/6/10 Lord, teach me your statutes. 1 Kgs 3:4-13 Ps 119:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Mk 6:30-34

Does Jesus make mistakes? When we move in a prompting of the Spirit, we must never be too certain of His designs. He so often calls us away to "rest", and we get there only to find a vast crowd of those to serve. Can the Spirit be "sneaky", or are we just too dull to see it? We beg Him for a little favor, and He pours out blessings far greater than we can comprehend. It is so wonderful and amazing as we do begin to see Him at work, taking every tiny step we take and move we make, and put it to use for those He needs to touch with His grace.

Friday 2/5/10 Blessed be God my salvation! Sir 47:2-11 Ps 18:31, 47 and 50, 51 Mk 6:14-29

The really, really great mystery that shapes our lives is that the Almighty God and Creator uses us. It really is amazing. Why, in heavens name, would He do it that way? He is so awesome and filled with power, but He just plain refuses to "do it himself". We all understand this, in our gut. Even when we

see a miracle, because we know Him, we start saying it was a result of our prayer, or this one's gift, or that one's faith and so on. Do you think I am saying that our prayers, our gifts, our faith are unimportant. Not at all. He uses us! Sure He will use the prayers we offer, and our gifts. He is the one who gave them to us!!! And He gave them to us when He gave us the gift of faith. So, yes by all means we must pray, pray, pray, and as a dear friend keeps telling me, we must study, study, study, and do,do,do. That is how He uses us. Just like David, we need to step out in faith to face the giants, and like John we need to keep telling the truth until they lop off our heads. Either way, He is using us!

Thursday 2/4/10 Lord, you are exalted over all. Kgs 2:1-4, 10-12 1 Chronicles 29:10, 11ab, 11d-12a, 12bcd Mk 6:7-13

There is a certain urgency to evangelization. Don't waste time getting ready, just go. Don't worry about the stuff you will need, you are on a mission from God. He will take care of you, OK you can take time to slip on your sandals. He doesn't want you wasting time watching and dodging the pebbles in the road! Don't waste time on the lunkheads who won't listen. He will get them next time, if they live long enough. All you do is preach the good news of repentance, drive out the demons, and cure the sick. PS: that means you have to spend a little time out where the troubles are. Never worry. God will take care of you!

Wednesday 2/3/10 Lord, forgive the wrong I have done. 2 Sm 24:2, 9-17 Ps 32:1-2, 5, 6, 7 Mk 6:1-6

Responsibility! How many depend on my actions, on my faith, on my surrender to the will of God. There are a great many things wrong in this world and every single one of them is the fruit of evil deeds and the selfish sins of those who have gone before us. Where am I in it all. What will be the consequences, the fruit of my actions, the natural result of the things I do today. Now do you see why Jesus commanded us only to love!

Tuesday 2/2/10 Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord! Mal 3:1-4 Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10 Heb 2:14-18 Lk 2:22-40

The power of death is a state of mind. It is not death but the fear of it that enslaves a person. Death is painful, to those who have not died. It is the end of pain to those who rise with Him, the one who suffered and died to make life possible for us. Faith, hope, and love, all synonyms for Jesus, is our answer to death, an answer freely given us by our Father through His Spirit. He is "I am". He is life.

Monday 2/1/10 Lord, rise up and save me. 2 Sm 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13 Ps 3:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 Mk 5:1-20

Faith is a gift. Really it is the gift. Knowing the Father puts everything else in perspective. In fact, love, though the greatest of all, is impossible without faith. How can I love my enemy? What can keep me from lopping off his head? After all everything he says and does is against me and God... or is it? Anyone who cannot realize that those who stand against him and his ideas are also in God's plan and under His authority has far too little faith to be able to love. It has been said that only by loving can we help bring the Kingdom into this world, and it is so very true. Unity, Peace, Freedom, Joy...none of these can be sought on their own right, but when we love each other they come naturally as the fruits of that love. They are the fruits of our love for each other. It is only our faith, the gift of the Father, that makes loving possible because faith removes fear, impatience, pride, etc. When people have faith in Him they begin to respect each other, listen to each other, see each other as He does. That is the birth of genuine love, and once it comes alive it can grow into the most amazing, life giving force in the universe. It is the Holy Spirit of God that inhabits every little drop of faith, driving out demons, healing illness and divisions, and compelling us to proclaim what Jesus has done for us.