

Scripture and Feast Day Notes

Sunday, February 21, 2021

From Today's Readings

Matthew 5: 17-48 Having just proclaimed the Beatitudes -- an astounding list of promised blessings -- Jesus clarifies that these do not replace the Law, but rather fulfill it, bringing it to completion. Sins such as murder and adultery begin in the heart; honor, justice and commitment need to be taken seriously. *Discuss/reflect: Jesus asks us to be completely reconciled with others before we honor God at the altar (23-24). What might this prompt us to do before we receive Holy Communion? (Consider those we have hurt and heal our differences.)*

Romans 12:1-13:10 A beautiful companion reading to Jesus' teachings about the Law, St. Paul asserts that the Torah is no longer the norm for conduct, rather it is love that must guide our behavior; love is the true "fulfillment of the law." (13:10) *Discuss/reflect: In verses 12:9-21, which two commands are the easiest for you to keep? Which two the hardest? **For primary/elementary grades:** Read 12: 9-21 from a children's Bible. Make mini-posters by choosing a simple phrase from this reading for children to illustrate. (Be happy! Share with others! Pray!)*

Isaiah 33: 2-22 In the shadow of Israel's enemy Assyria, Isaiah pleads for God's power and presence, trusting that he will appear in all his majesty as lawgiver, judge and king. *Discuss/reflect: What qualities of God in vv 2 and 3 are reflected in the titles given to him in v. 22? (God is gracious, strong, a source of salvation and terrifyingly great power; these qualities are reflected in his title of judge, lawgiver and king).*

Today is the Sunday of the Expulsion



This Sunday invokes the loss of happiness as Adam and Eve are driven out of Paradise. The day's hymn recounts how the forbidden fruit tasted of sin and death.

Our ancestors knew they had made a mistake after eating the fruit, for they were ashamed of their nakedness and foolishly tried to cover themselves and hide from God. The notion that they were wiser than God in deciding to eat the fruit of the "knowledge of good and evil" is at the heart of every sinful thought or action to this day. We often experience this in daily life. And when we do

something we're not proud of, facing God is indeed difficult. Expulsion Sunday reminds us of our original exile from God's presence but an exile that His loving mercy will not let us endure forever. Great Lent is a unique opportunity to ponder God's absence even as we seek Him in 40 days of prayer and reflection. *Read Genesis 3. In verses 1-5, the serpent undermines Eve's trust in God; what erodes your trust in God?*