

The things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create; For I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight.

Isaiah 65

Fourth Week of Lent: March 10 - 16, 2013

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Fourth Week of Lent

For the **Fourth Sunday of Lent** we read the powerful story of the Prodigal Son from **Luke's Gospel**. The younger son, who asks for his inheritance and spends it all, returns and asks to be a servant at his father's house. Instead he is welcomed home with open arms by his father who was filled with compassion, ran to his son and forgave him. The older son is jealous and will not share in the happiness but the father says to "celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found." For Masses using [Cycle A readings for the RCIA](#), **John's Gospel** will offer the story of the man born blind. (For more information, see [Praying the Gospels of Weeks 3, 4 and 5](#).)

Our gospels this week are all from **John's Gospel**. After two days of healing stories, the opposition against Jesus builds. In Cana, in Galilee, Jesus heals the son of a royal official. Back down in Jerusalem, he heals a man who was sick for 38 years, incurring the wrath of his enemies because he did it on the Sabbath. Because of this, and because he called God his Father, they now plot a way to kill him. Jesus says his opponents do not want to come to him for life. He calls God his father and says, "I have testimony greater than John's." Unafraid of his opponents, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for a feast and openly tells people that he has come from God. They did not arrest him then, "for his hour had not yet come." Thinking they know where Jesus is from (in both senses: where he lived now and his origin in heaven), his enemies insist that Jesus can't be a prophet:

Daily Prayer This Week

The gospels this week make it very clear toward the end of the week that Jesus faced opposition that couldn't accept who he is. We see that Jesus comes to lay down his life that we might live. So, this week of Lent is an important time for us to ask ourselves if there are any parts of our hearts, any of our patterns, that oppose Jesus and his desire to give us life. This kind of honesty can transform our lives. It can allow the grace of God to bring reconciliation and healing we might not have imagined.

Even if it hasn't been easy to get really engaged with Lent so far, we can still make a beginning, even now. The key is openness and desire. If we can feel any attraction, any sign that the Lord is possibly drawing us, then the Lord can work with us - no matter what resistance or fear we might also be experiencing. All we have to do is act out of these desires and simply ask the Lord for the grace to help us be more honest and more open to what he is offering us. For example, we can ask for the grace to examine our consciences more thoroughly. We could try a different approach to facing any resistance we might have to the Lord's working in us. We might not commit the big sins, but we may not have examined what we fail to do. Who am I failing to love, to forgive, to be generous to? From whom am I withholding affection, care, reconciliation? Where can I live more honestly, with more integrity? How might I

“Look and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

On the **Fifth Sunday of Lent**, Parishes that are doing the Third Scrutiny will use [John's gospel of the raising of Lazarus](#).

For the rest of us using the Cycle C readings for this liturgical year, **John's gospel** brings us the story of the woman accused of adultery. Religious leaders bring a woman to Jesus challenging him: "Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" Jesus responded only, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." The crowd quietly dispersed. Jesus seeing there is no one left to accuse the woman says gently, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."

proactively change my own personal patterns of escape with patterns of care for others?

It is a time of grace when we can experience moments of "recognition," or self-understanding. But it is *not* a grace to beat up on ourselves or become self-absorbed in our own guilt. It *is* grace to feel grateful to the Lord for showing us obstacles to the life he is offering us. It is grace to feel our spirits lighten as we feel drawn to greater freedom and peace. It is incredible grace when we are drawn to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This week, let us give thanks to the Lord who deeply desires our greater freedom and joy. As we go to bed each night, let us thank the Lord for what we saw that day and renew our desires for the next day of grace.

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