

## Monday, March 23, 2020 Meditation

From Fr. Loecke (Monday): 🙏

Here is the opening antiphon for today's Mass.

"As for me, I trust in the Lord  
Let me be glad and rejoice in your mercy,  
for you have seen my affliction."

I am not sure if it just that I am more attuned to some of these little things from the Sacred Liturgy or what, but it seems so many lines from the readings or the antiphons address the situation we are finding ourselves as we continue to deal with this pandemic virus.

The theme of trusting in the Lord appeared in the Gospel for the day as well. The royal official's son was seriously ill and near death. He heard about the works Jesus had accomplished elsewhere, so in a spirit of confidence and belief that Jesus would be able to heal his son, the official asked Jesus' intervention to save his son. Jesus informed the man that his son would live. The man simply departed from Jesus and returned home believing in what Jesus said to him. On his way home his servants meet him and told him the boy was going to live.

Trusting another person is not always easy because we live in a world of suspicion and disappointment. Yet the official, without hesitation, trusted the words of Jesus and he was not disappointed. As a result of the boy being healed, the official's entire household became believers.

This story from St. John is given to us not just as a happy ending story, but it is given to us to remind us once again that Jesus is trustworthy and that he has our best interests in mind. Does this mean we won't get the virus? Does it mean there won't be hardships to face as a result of the virus and the impact it is having on the economy? Not at all, as we still live in a broken world and we continue to deal with the effects of original sin. But what we can trust is that in all of our fears at this time Jesus is with us and no matter what happens. Even if it is painful, we will be ok.

Here is something Sr. Marysia Weber, RSM, taught me when I had the great experience of being with the Mercy Sisters of Alma in 2013. It is what she called the practice of being mindful. I have found that it is a very helpful tool when feeling anxious and stressed in life. When anxious about what is happening, stop your mind from racing by thinking about the five senses. In the given moment, think of something you can smell, hear, taste, touch, and see. Such a practice pulls the mind back to reality instead of being filled with worry and fear. It has been a great help to me. This exercise brings with it a feeling of calm and peace, gifts given to us by Jesus to help us stay focused. Sometimes when I am particularly stressed about something and my mind is filled with all kinds of what-ifs I practice this mindfulness exercise many times throughout the day. For me, this practice helps to maintain a sense of balance in times of disorder and great uncertainty. In being mindful we experience, over time, God's calming voice reassuring us that He is with us and our response is to place our trust in Him that all will be well.

Here is one of my favorite images of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Here she is tossing rose petals into the home of the Holy Family and Jesus is running to her with great excitement. She had a profound trust in and love for Our Lord even in the darkest times of her life. May The Little Flower intercede for all of us during these uncertain times in life. -- Fr. Loecke