

Fifth Sunday of Lent – Year B

March 18, 2018

Christ the Good Shepherd, ORCC

Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:7-8

John 12:20-33

WELCOME to this AMAZING Church where we hear God's Word and feast at this Table for spiritual comfort where **YOU're LOVED** without measure!

My sisters and brothers; enduring members of this Church and new-found-Friends of Christ the Good Shepherd, WELCOME! You and I have been embracing our Lenten journey of fasting, prayer, and alms-giving; so as to be **CLEANSED** or **MADE ANEW** in God's Peace and Love.

This Sunday the readings focus us on Jesus' life and death whereby the Old Testament passages help us understand the life and death of the Lord.

My sisters and brothers, without the context of today's Old Testament, the Jewish Scriptures, it would be most difficult and perhaps even impossible—to understand Jesus' life and death.

Today's reading, the Old Testament, St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews and John's Gospel provide an interconnectedness around Jesus' life; his manifestation of God's Peace and Love.

Without such a context, our Lenten journey of self-sacrifice, alms-giving and prayers become more difficult to understand.

In our first reading, the prophet Jeremiah is clear that God's relationship with His people has been difficult wherein there existed

- A previously broken Covenant;
- A need for a New Covenant that will last forever right.

Regardless of such circumstances, the Prophet Jeremiah shows us and highlights a God who

- is always seeking us out,
- is willing to start a New Covenant, and
- always wants to love us.

My sisters and brothers, what a wonderful God we have. *This God was known and loved by the Prophet Jeremiah and you and I are invited to know and love this same God,* who loves us and who always forgives us—and forgets our sins!

The second reading comes from the Letter to the Hebrews. This letter is used more and more during the time we come close to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The letter speaks so clearly of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus: “Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

- God has taken on our flesh;
- God understands our human weakness even though God in Christ never sins;
- God in Christ knows our sinful nature and truly suffers;
- The carrying of the Cross and the death on the Cross are real and unite Jesus to us in a way that is unimaginable for God to share in our lives;

The Gospel from Saint John today includes a short passage in which the divine breaks through into the ordinary life once again. When we hear a voice from heaven in the Gospels, then we know that the divine is breaking into the ordinary. Jesus says: “Father, glorify your name.” The Voice from Heaven says: “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”

The challenge in this last part of Lent's Journey is to LISTEN to the Lord, to the whole of the Old Testament and to the Church.

My sisters and brothers God is speaking to us. Will we listen? Will you and I answer through our life of prayer, alms-giving and self-sacrifice? Will we give our lives in obedience to the Lord Jesus—always with love and joy?

It's my suggestion to you and me that only a life spent for others will be glorified here in this world and in Heaven.

We know that the world owes everything to people who have spent their time and talents for God and for their fellow human beings.

Mother Teresa, for instance, gave up her comfortable teaching career and, with just 17 cents in her pocket, began her challenging life for the "poorest of the poor" in the crowded streets of Calcutta.

Thus, she became, in the words of the Secretary General of the U.N., "the most powerful woman in the world." We see similar cases in the history of great saints, scientists and benefactors of humankind in all walks of life.

My sisters and brothers God is speaking to us. Will we answer? Will we give our lives in obedience to the Lord Jesus—always with love and joy?

