

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
FORTY FIVE DAYS TOWARDS THE CROSS
FROM DEACON CHRIS
LENT 2024

Nineteenth Station: Third Sunday in Lent. He sent me to give the good news to the poor.

“We adore you, O Christ etc.

Scripture Reading

Isaiah Chapter 61 verses 1 to 3

13th June St. Anthony

Reflection

This is a mission. This is a remit given by God. It is a message of hope. It is a message that we see fulfilled when our Lord comes. It is a message that he refers to when he reads it in the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4; 18-19).

At our baptism we were anointed with the oil of Baptism and the oil of Chrism. The first helps us to prepare ourselves for the journey ahead. Chrism, which we can see has the root of Christ in it, is used to enrol us, to share in the three part ministry of Christ as priest, prophet and king. Chrism is used at Confirmation, the ordination to the priesthood, the ordination of a bishop and the consecration of new altar.

The anointing is important. It is the authorisation to go and spread this good news to everybody; the poor, the broken hearted, captives and so on. Nobody is omitted from receiving the Good News.

At the end of Mass we are sent to *Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. DO WE?*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

I love you, Jesus ..

Monday of Week 3 in Lent: Twentieth Station: The Lord appears suddenly and unexpectedly..

“We adore you, O Christ etc.

Scripture Reading

Malachi Chapter 3 verses 1 to 4

2nd February The Presentation

Reflection

This is the last book in the Old Testament. There is an element of reflection, a looking back on what has happened, recorded by the Old Testament writers and then a looking forward to when the Saviour will come. This book opens the way for the New to enter in.

Tradition is a word that we often mis-understand. What is tradition? Lots will say that it is the hanging on to what we have always done and that is how we should keep it.

Tradition is handing on what we have learnt from the past and that helps to keep on. So it is with our faith. We have to hand it on and as we do so it becomes deeper, more meaningful as it spreads. By that I mean that it has to be what God handed down to us not what we want it to be.

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Tuesday of Week 3 in Lent: Twenty First Station : Zechariah cannot accept that he and Elizabeth are going to have a son.

“We adore you, O Christ etc,

Scripture Reading

Luke Chapter 1 verses 5 to 25

Weekdays of Advent 19th December

Reflection

Abram and Sara, Hannah, Samson’s mother, and Zechariah and Elizabeth all have something in common. They wanted children and through God’s grace they all had boys who would do great work in God’s name. In today’s offering there has to be a degree of sympathy for Zechariah’s reaction but maybe we don’t hear the inflection in his voice. Gabriel has laid out what the boy will turn out to be. A priest of Zechariah’s standing should be able to draw on his knowledge of scripture to understand and accept what is being said. Human nature being as it is takes us down paths we don’t need to go down. For his lack of faith Zechariah loses the power of speech.

It is often said that God is the God of surprises. He asks us to do something for him and we wonder, ‘Why me?’ We can usually find lots of reasons not to do something. Do we look for reasons to do something? Whichever way it is we do sometimes say that we are speechless. Maybe this is the nearest we get to Zechariah’s situation.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. I love you, Jesus....

Wednesday of Week 3 in Lent : Twenty Second Station: The Annunciation of the Lord, the Saviour of the World.

“We adore you, O Christ etc.

Scripture Reading

Luke Chapter 1 verses 26 to 38

25th March The Annunciation

Reflection

Chapter 1 of Luke’s gospel gives us two accounts that contrast sharply. We read, yesterday, how Zechariah, a priest, would not believe what the Gabriel said to him. Today we read about a betrothed virgin who is told that she is to conceive and bear a son who is the Son of God. She ponders the things that Gabriel has said and asks how can this happen. Both Zechariah and Mary know what the scriptures say. They know the power of the Lord but one rejects the other accepts. Mary says ‘Yes’ to God.

We see the power of the Holy Spirit is this reading. Mary says yes inspired by the Spirit who will help her to ponder all the things that will happen. The Holy Spirit is a vital part of our lives.

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The Holy Spirit inspires, guides and gives us the words to say. Let the Spirit work within us so that we, too, can say 'Yes'.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. I love you, Jesus.....,

Thursday of Week 3 in Lent: Twenty Third Station: Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. "We adore you, O Christ etc.

Scripture Reading

Luke Chapter 1 verses 39 to 56

31st May The Visitation

Reflection

The three tenets of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Some translations give mercy instead of almsgiving. With this translation in mind we look at what our Lady did. Mary, with no thought of herself, goes to see her cousin Elizabeth. She wants to share in Elizabeth's good news. When she arrived at Zechariah's house Mary was met by Elizabeth, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, and greeted Mary not only as her cousin but also the mother of her Lord.

We have this wonderful scene of an expectant mother talking to an expectant mother and the unborn child recognising who the other unborn child is. What power we see from the Holy Spirit.

Mary gives us the Magnificat. A beautiful prayer that is recited every evening in the Prayer of the Church. Mary's prayer reflects the prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel.

The Visitation helps to highlight the need for us to get our priorities right. It is so easy for us to say that we are too busy. But what are we busy with? That is a question we must ask ourselves and we have to be truthful with our answer. The more time we give the more we get back.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. I love you, Jesus.....,

Friday in Week 3 of Lent :Twenty Fourth Station : The Birth of John the Baptist

"We adore you, O Christ etc.

Scripture Reading

Luke Chapter 1 verses 57 to 66 Daytime Mass of 24th June The Birth of John the Baptist.

Reflection.

'*They shared her joy.*' This is a very telling statement. There usually is great joy when a baby is born. This passage shows a change in attitude to Elizabeth because she is a mother and Zechariah a father. Their 'shame' is forgotten. There is, however, more drama to come when it comes to naming the child. When Elizabeth said that he had to be named John they wouldn't accept it. What does Zechariah want him called? When he writes the name John

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they were astonished. At that moment Zechariah starts to talk again. He praises God and he has backed his wife, too.

It is hard to take in something that is out of the norm. We can find it hard to understand or accept but we have to be open to the out of the ordinary, especially when it comes to our Faith. Sometimes we have a dream and it is shattered. It is shattered because there is something better than what we dreamed.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. I love you, Jesus.....,

Saturday in Week 3 of Lent: Twenty Fifth Station: The Birth of Jesus Christ in a Stable at Bethlehem "We adore you, O Christ etc.

Scripture Reading

Luke Chapter 2 verses 1 to 20

Midnight and Dawn Mass of Christmas Day

Reflection.

Joseph and Mary are law-abiding citizens in both spiritual and temporal matters. They make a long journey (imagine walking from Preston to Carlisle) and end up in a stable where Mary gives birth. We don't know who was with them. We don't know if anybody was particularly interested apart from the census people.

What would social media have made of it? How would BBC have reported it?

Social media has its place but it is too easy to hurl abuse or wrong information through it. The angel made the news known to shepherds and then a host of angels sang praising God. The shepherds went and saw for themselves and related what they had been told. Then they went back to their sheep. Mary treasured all that she had been told and pondered them in her heart.

Do we ponder what we hear in scripture?

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. I love you, Jesus.....,