

St. Louis Catholic Church

Wednesday of the 4th Week of Lent

Isaiah 49:8-15

John 5:17-30

Isaiah proclaims to Israel in exile that the Lord will once again deliver them on the day He will choose and bring them back to the land He has given them. There will be a new exodus and God will lead them. Like a shepherd, He will protect and take care that all their needs are fulfilled. The elect will come from all directions. In the reading we see a hymn of praise, the response of the people to God's saving mercy. God is doing great things in the midst of the people. The people needed hope. They had been despondent, thinking that God had forgotten them. There are limits to human love but God's love goes far beyond even the greatest human love.

Even today people feel that God is very far away. They do not experience His concern about what is happening in the world. Did God just create us and set us loose on our own way? Is He interested in our fears, struggles, temptations, pain and heartache? Like Israel we sometimes feel abandoned. With Israel we can cry "the Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me". Isaiah reminds the people that God has unconditional care and love. "Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you".

We are naturally confused when the unbelievable and terrible happens. Why? Can't understand this misfortune, it doesn't make sense. Sounds familiar doesn't it? The people like Isaiah who speak to us are ones of great faith. When adversity happens they embrace and accept the cross because they trust that this dark moment will be overcome by the grace of God. He won't abandon us they seem to be saying by their courage and steadfastness.

Behind all of the hope for us today is that we know that God will not desert us because He has come in Christ. We have a High Priest who can sympathize with our darkness because He experienced it Himself. "My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?" is a human identity with Israel and our own anxiety.

In the Gospel Christ identified Himself as One with the Father. He is God. God has become a human and elevated us by gracing our human condition.

Yes, times are difficult. Many things can't be rationally explained when we believe in an all-loving, caring God. Yet Christ in His humanity experienced the worst. Rejected, tried, convicted, betrayed, denied, spat upon, humiliated, crucified and died as a totally good, innocent loving person. God did you forsake Him? No, God emptied Himself, took on our sins and freely gave His life. Why? To overcome the power of sin and death. But, I think, also to let us know that the Resurrection follows.

All that we face that is like the Crucifixion--unbearable, senseless and seemingly forgotten by God--will be transformed. We survive and live. Like a loving parent, He could never forget us. We, even in the worst moment, have God with us. Trust. Count on Him.

God Bless,
Msgr. John McArthur

Key Events This Week:

1. Night of Reflection--Mass 6:00 p.m.--Pot Luck--Reflection--Read Mark 10 for preparation
2. Confessions Thursday from 5:00-6:00 p.m.
3. Stations of the Cross--Friday Evening--5:30 p.m.