

**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 2 - 8, 2008

The Fourth Week of Lent

The **Fourth Sunday of Lent** brings the story of the man born blind from **John's Gospel**. His disciples ask, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus heals the man who now sees more clearly than the Pharisees the true identity of Jesus. "I do believe, Lord." At some Masses, we will hear the [Scrutinies](#) for RCIA candidates.

The first readings this week can be read as powerful messages to us from our God about our Lenten journey. They also seem to be chosen with an eye to the persecution Jesus will experience.

Our gospels this week are all from the **Fourth 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 that 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. Unafraid of them, 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 prophets don't come from where Jesus is from.

The **Fifth Sunday of Lent** brings us closer toward the Passion and death of Jesus. This is the third and final week of Scrutinies in our parishes for those in the RCIA program. In **John's Gospel**, we hear the story of the raising of Lazarus. Jesus is not there when his dear friend, Lazarus dies, but after meeting with Lazarus' grief-stricken sisters and himself weeping, he stands at the door of the tomb.

Daily Prayer This Week

The readings this week make it very clear 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? With whom am I withholding affection, care, reconciliation? Where can I live more honestly, with more integrity? How might I proactively change 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. It isn't grace to "beat up on" ourselves. 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

""Lazarus, come out!" Jesus commands. The man who had been dead came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of burial cloth, and a cloth covered his face. Jesus then told the people, "Untie him and let him go."

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.