LENTEN REFLECTIONS

2024 SERIES

Fifth Sunday of Lent

What Will I Do for Christ?

WRITTEN BY SISTER MARLENE BUTLER, GNSH

First Reading: Jeremiah1:31-34
Second Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9
Psalm: Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15
Gospel: John 12:20-33

We are now at the fifth Sunday in Lent with two weeks until Easter Sunday, which includes the holiest week of the liturgical year. As we approach these two weeks, it might be helpful to stop for a moment and ask ourselves: what have I done for Christ, what am I doing for Christ, and what will I do for Christ? We may have made some resolutions for Lent, but have we lost touch with them as we got caught in the busyness of life in the world in which we live?

Now is the time to focus on: What will I do for Christ in the next two weeks? We hear a lot these days about mindfulness, the quality or state of being conscious or aware of our inner self and all that's around us. Right now, we are being more aware of Christ's presence in our life especially in these next two weeks.

How can we learn to do this? First, we can learn to stop for a few moments and breathe deeply in and out, which helps us to be calm. Ask Jesus to help us to stop as the busyness will always be present, Jesus loves each of us and wants us to be at peace, a peace that the world cannot give.

Jesus knew that he was coming close to the cross and so he spent some time in the garden to pray to his Father. He begged his Father to let this cup pass but realized that he wanted and must do the will of the Father.

Take some time to ponder this scene. This probably was the most difficult day of his life, the struggle between doing the will of the Father and doing what would be easier for him.

Isn't this what happens to each of us when we are struggling to do something that God is asking of us, maybe being kind to someone who has hurt us, etc. Jesus loves us and will help us to do the better thing if only we ask him.

Think for a moment about the scene when Jesus was hanging on the cross. When the good thief spoke to him, Jesus responded by saying this day you will be with me in paradise.

Jesus did not rebuke him for what he had done; He simply invited him to be in paradise. Sometimes when we are deeply hurt or in a difficult situation, we don't think to ask for help. We think we can take care of the situation by our self.

(more)

This is why it would be good for us to practice mindfulness, to be aware of Jesus in our life. He is near to us and is always willing to help with the little things as well as with the big things.

Take some time to breathe deeply in and out. Be aware of sounds around you, for example, church bells, a train whistle or a wind chime you hear around you. When you hear the sound, stop and recall the presence of Jesus in your life. It only takes a minute or two.

If there is no sound around, be aware of a sunrise or a sunset or flowers that have just burst into bloom. It's a moment to express gratitude to God for the beauty of nature.

We read in today's Gospel that Jesus says:

"*If a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. …Whoever serves me must follow me.*"

This was the cross that Jesus bore. So too, we as we follow Jesus, we must bear the crosses that come to us.

So the question is:

- What will I do for Christ?
- Will I always remember he is with me?

With Christ's help, I can conquer crosses, both small and large.