

WEEKLY MEDITATION for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son is a story about hearts: selfish hearts and generous hearts, closed hearts and open hearts, cold hearts and warm hearts, broken hearts and joyful hearts, unrepentant hearts and repentant hearts, unforgiving hearts and forgiving hearts, resentful hearts



and grateful hearts. It reveals much about the vagaries of the human heart.

When all is said and done, the heart matters profoundly. The spiritual heart is what I am deep down. It is the real me. Darkness of heart is the blackest night of all. Emptiness of heart

is the greatest poverty of all. A heavy heart is a wearisome burden. A broken heart is a deep wound.

But this parable reveals how steadfast is the heart of God. God never closes his heart to anyone. No matter how far from home we may wander and no matter what we may have done, if we come home to God, he will welcome us with love and joy!

WISDOM'S CORNER

Love him all the more

The great leader of India, Mahatmas Gandhi tells of the time when he was 15 years old and stole a little piece of gold from his brother. But, he felt so bad about it that he made up his mind to confess it to his father.

He wrote out his sin on a piece of paper, asking for forgiveness and punishment, while promising never to steal again.

At the time this happened, his father was sick in bed. Gandhi handed him the note and sat by the bedside waiting for his father's judgment. His father sat up in bed and began to read the note. As he read it, tears came into his eyes. Gandhi himself also cried.

Instead of getting angry and punishing him, the father hugged his repentant son, and that was the end of the matter. The experience of being loved while he was in sin had a profound effect on Gandhi.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

"When a parent laments that his child has taken to evil ways, what should he do? Love him all the more."

Dear friends,

I am always excited to read the New Testament passage that we hear today: the parable of the Prodigal Son. This text about forgiveness, family relationships, envy, jealousy... I don't know how you see this text, but it is very powerful. When we read it, we can ask ourselves: With which of these figures can we identify ourselves? Let us consider the profligate son who left his family home — who didn't care much about anyone's feelings or opinions; he was interested only in himself. He knew only his needs. After a while, when he lost everything, including himself. When he reached rock bottom, the text gives us one of the most beautiful descriptions of the human condition, saying "Then he came to his senses." He turned around and changed his life. To "come to our senses" means to realize who we truly are. When we reach rock bottom, when we connect with the depths of our soul, then real change takes place. Our perspectives, our worldview, our present and future all change. Then we see what we had, what we lost. Then we can see ourselves in a near-perfect mirror, without lies, without deception or masks. Only then, without difficulty we can say, "I am sorry, I made a mistake, I messed up. I desire to start again." When a person connects with the depths of his or her soul, that person can become unconditionally sincere, following the path of truth. To come to our senses means not to be divided within ourselves anymore, to know ourselves so well that we will never protect our false ego.



Your Father Joe jgrbes@gmail.com

Join us in praying the Stations of the Cross / every Friday at 7:00 P.M.

Sr. Alma Dujmic, R.I.P.

It has come to our attention that a longtime schoolteacher at St. Jerome's, Sr. Alma Dujmic, ASC, passed away last May 26, at the age of 92. A beautiful person, she died peacefully in the Columbia, Pa., sisters retirement community where she had been since 2002. Sr. Alma was born in Steelton, Pa., to Matthew & Barbara (nee Bekelja) Dujmic. She joined the Adorers of the Precious Blood of Christ in 1939, and was a sister in this religious family for more than 75 years. Sr. Alma was a teacher for 53 years, 48 in elementary schools and 5 in high school as an English teacher, teaching in Georgia, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and for many years at our St. Jerome School, which the Precious Blood Sisters staffed through most of its existence since 1922. Sr. Alma was also a gifted art teacher. She made her mark on many souls.

May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in God's peace!

Second Collection This Weekend:

For the Church in Central & Eastern Europe
Donations collected will help seminaries, parishes and shelters for children and young people in need of housing, education and counseling.

Tuesday, March 16

The Parish Council has its regular monthly meeting this Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. Please, all members should attend. Thank you.

Sunday, March 21

Anointing of the Sick will take place on Sunday, March 21 at the end of each Mass. All who are ill in any way and desire to receive this sacrament are invited to come.

Church Manners Do Matter

Does it look like the sign of peace?

In the sacred space of church, when we extend the sign of peace to one another, let us make it even more meaningful and sincere by being sure to respectfully make eye-contact as we make our reverent gesture of peace.

Palm Sunday, March 28

St. Jerome School's HSA holds the annual Palacinka & Pancake Breakfast with the Easter Bunny. Breakfast and pictures will be available 8 a.m.—12 noon. For \$8, adults get 2 palacinka (crepes) or 4 pancakes, 4 pieces of bacon or sausage, and a drink. For \$4, kids get a palacinka or 2 pancakes, 2 bacon or sausages, and a drink. Homemade baked goods will be available for purchase. Pictures with the Easter Bunny will also be available for purchase: \$15 for 1 – 5x7, 2 – 4x6 & 10 wallets. The large raffle table will be full of great prizes. Tickets for the big \$12,000 raffle are now available until the drawing at the end of the day. Tickets are \$50 each (only 400 printed). First prize is \$7,500, 2nd and 3rd prizes are \$1,500 each, and 4th and 5th prizes are \$750 each. Baked donations are welcome. For tickets or info, call Eva at 312-842-5485 or Laura at 773-254-0010.



Palm Sunday, March 28

The Croatian Woman society together with all the Croatian parishes in Chicago will host the annual humanitarian luncheon on Palm Sunday, March 28 in the Croatian Cultural Center. Tickets can be obtained from members of this organization. Proceeds will go to purchase special medical equipment to help children at the hospital in Mostar. For more information consult the web site: www.hrvatskazena.org.

Monday, March 29

Living Stations of the Cross in our church, presented by St. Jerome's schoolchildren, at 7 p.m. This is powerful depiction of Christ's Passion at the start of Holy Week. We wholeheartedly invite you to join us.

Tuesday, March 30

General cleaning of our church to prepare for Easter. We invite all who can come, to join us at 6:30 p.m. — the more who come, the sooner we finish.

Pray as a family.

Every night between 6 & 7 p.m.

May you all have a happy St. Joseph's Day and a good St. Patrick's Day this week!