



Church of the Resurrection

Tampa, Florida

Dear Friends in Christ:

Please find our annual Lenten Meditation Series for those in and beyond our parish community.

Again this year we have framed the Liturgical Observation for that Day, the Scripture Lessons for each day with Meditations followed by a quote from a Saint of the Church, a Prayer and a Lenten Discipline that can be done by people of all ages.

Why do we do this? We at Church of the Resurrection in Tampa maintain that the spiritual life is marked by the disciplines of the church as given to us in the tradition of the church where we are each called to personal prayer joining our prayers with the whole Communion of Saints, in the Daily Offices and Holy Eucharist, done in concert with service to the sick and needy through all the feasts and seasons of the Church year. These changing seasons and solemn festivals draw us into a deeper awareness of the truths they celebrate and keep us mindful of the great company of women and men who have sought and found God, whose lives still encourage us. The disciplines of Lent and fasting days help keep us mindful of these realities leading us to the profound heart of our common life in the great Paschal Rites of Holy Week and Easter.

This weekly meditation series is to assist members and those who are part of the wider church to undertake a Lenten Journey, where one may discover God anew, who is the source of all life, all truth, all hope and all beauty. May it be a season where Christ, finds a home anew in your hearts and homes and May the Spirit, who gives new life supports us in this journey day by day.

The lectionary selections are a compilation of the lessons from the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox lectionaries as well as those particular lessons associated with the various saints from their traditions

In Christ,

The Reverend Canon Kevin Francis Donlon
Rector of Church of the Resurrection, Tampa -Lent 2009



	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	EPISTLE	GOSPEL
Ash Wed Feb 17	am: 95, 32, 143 pm: 102, 130	Amos 5:6-15	Heb 12:1-14	Luke 18:9-14

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Originally, the period began on what is now the first Sunday in Lent; but, it being found that, when Sundays, as improper for fasting, were omitted, there remained only thirty-six days, the period was made by Pope Gregory to commence four days earlier namely, on what has since been called Ash Wednesday.

Today’s liturgy gives us basic directions for the next 40 days. As a first step to clearing our hearts and mind of obstacles to God, this day is an opportunity to engage in prayer and fasting. Today, and every day this Lent, is an opportunity to spend time with God, read over the Scriptures for the day, listening to what God is saying and committing to Acts of Charity to me, and writing down what I hear.?

MEDITATION OF THE DAY Lent is a time of remembering—remembering who we are and whose we are. The disciplines and liturgical practices of Lent are about turning our focus away from the deadening distractions that sometimes fill our days toward the essentials of life and love. We pray. We fast. We give alms. We turn our attention toward God, toward our interior lives, and toward others. And we do so in order to remember, to put back together again our covenant with God, and to realign ourselves with the grace of our baptism. Perhaps we as a community could consider the disciplines of Lent not as disciplines but rather as a way to deepen the covenant that binds us to Christ and each other.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord, as we begin the discipline of the Lenten Journey, make us holy through these holy disciplines and help us to avoid evil and temptation. Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: *“To take up the cross of Christ is no great action done once for all; it consists in the continual practice of small duties which are distasteful to us.” – John Henry Newman*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Keep a Solemn or Simple Fast, using the money for the Mite Box and the time spent eating pondering the countless throngs suffering who are suffering in Haiti.

Thurs Feb 18	am: 37:1-18 pm: 37:19-42	Hab 3:1-18	Phil 3:12-21	Lk 9:22-25
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Thursday After Ash Wednesday - *Colman of Lindisfarne, Bishop and Missionary, 676*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: A disciple of St. Columba born in Connaught, Ireland. He was a bold voice at the Synod of Whitby defending the Celtic celebration of Gospel against those who insisted on the Roman rites and practices. He resisted the decision of Whitby and led a group of Irish and English monks to the Isle of Innishboffin, near Connaught and then onto monks to Mayo. He was committed the liturgy and formation and was regarded by the likes of Alcuin and St. Bede.

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: Jesus clearly states what we as Christian followers need to do in order to live in Christ. In the gospel story today Jesus says to his disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." Like the Colman centuries ago, at times stand against the tide of popularity for the conviction of the Gospel.

We must make a choice. This choice is between self-denial which is initially seen by us as a hardship; versus the call God gives to us to make it a lifestyle. God asks us to give up our lives to him daily, not just during Lent. He asks us to continue to choose to find him and become closer to him in order to spend eternal life with him and witness that promise to the world.

Lent is the time to name what the obstacles are in our life that is sinful, unhealthy and self-centered. The essential choice this season is a "change of heart" from the circumstances, attitudes, and other behaviors that contribute to my living outside the bounds of grace in Christ Jesus.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord, teach us to enter more deeply into the mysteries of this Holy Season that the power of this season may be more effective for ourselves and for the world as we seek the sacrament of salvation. Amen

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: "For though I am bound for the name of Christ, I am not yet perfect in Jesus Christ. For now I begin to be a disciple, and I speak to you as fellow disciples with me. For it was needful for me to have been stirred up by you in faith, exhortation, patience, and long-suffering". – *St. Ignatius of Antioch*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Rise early this day and consider practicing *Lectio Divina* on today's lessons as a new discipline for your spiritual Journey. Go to <http://www.thedome.org/SeekGodWithUs/NourishSpiritOnline/WaysOfPrayer/ContemplativePrayer/Lectio.html>

Fri Feb 19	am: 95, 31 pm: 35	Eccl 4. 20-28	2 Timothy 4. 1-8	<i>John 12. 24-32</i>
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Friday After Ash Wednesday – *Feast of Janani Luwum, Archbishop and Martyr of Uganda, 1977 (transferred from Ash Wednesday)*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: - *On the Fridays of Lent, it is customary (in the Church of the East and West) to abstain from meat as a sign of our common penance. It represents our efforts to abstain from - do without - so many other patterns that get in the way of our happiness and wholeness. Sacrifice and doing without is a worthy thought to ponder when one considers the life and witness of the saint remembered this week.*

On this feast we recall the witness of Archbishop Luwum who exercised exceptional and courageous leadership when he opposed Idi Amin's regime of tyranny, gross human rights violations and "islamisation" agenda in Uganda. The vibrant Anglican Church of Uganda under his leadership was on the verge of centennial celebrations of its birth through the seed of the blood of the Ugandan Martyrs. Thus Archbishop Luwum became the first martyr of the second century of Christianity in Uganda.

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: What is the implication of this Gospel passage in our lives today? This is an important question when we consider the life and witness of Archbishop Luwum. Are we individuals who are effected and affected by the changing demands of today's world in relation to our faith and Christian life? IF we understand the way of the world we know the journey will be rocky and rough and we need to be strengthened by Word and Sacrament.

The bread of the Eucharist, made out of grains of wheat, is offered to us as food for the journey so that we have the strength to face what the world may throw our way. Who of us does not need spiritual renewal and nurture?

Archbishop Luwum's witness reminds us that martyrdom always bear fruit; this is why the Scripture says «Those who love their life», paradoxically, «destroy it». How do we hear that passage in our place and time? Have we been doing what is right and just in relation to our Christian faith?

Christ died to bear, with his blood, fruit; we have to imitate Him to resurrect with Him and bear fruit with Him. Can we join those persecuted Christians who offer their lives silently for the welfare of their brothers and sisters? This is critical as we must learn this Lent that the grain that dies is a pathway to Life.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: God our Redeemer, whose Church was strengthened by the blood of your martyr Janani Luwum: so bind us, in life and death, to Christ's sacrifice

that our lives, broken and offered with his, may carry his death and proclaim his resurrection in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “Prodigal sons are forgiven and reconciled with their heavenly Father, could they do other than forgive one another? A fellowship of prodigal sons came into being -- the church of Christ. Love begets love. A new power ... was let loose upon our suffering world, the power to love those who have not deserved love, the unworthy, the unlovely and unlovable, a man's enemies, and even his torturers. Christians, in imitation of the Savior, became, as it were, Christ's to one another and to the world”. – *Archbishop Luwum, 1977*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE - Abstain from lunch today and make your other meals simple. During that time of lunch, make a commitment to yourself to spend time in reflective prayer on the action of God's grace in your life. Listen to God so that you may draw closer to God this Lent and at the same time consider making a gift of the monies you would have spent today on meals for the Luwum Trust

<http://www.jananiuwumtrust.com/help.html>

Sat Feb 20	am: 30, 32 pm: 42, 43	Eze 39:21-29	Phil 4:10-20	Luke 5:27-32
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Saturday After Ash Wednesday – *Leo, Bishop of Catania 789*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: St Leo was bishop of the city of Catania, in Sicily. He was famed for his benevolence and charity, and his Christian love for the poor and the vagrant. The Lord granted him the gifts of healing various illnesses, and working miracles. He was especially dedicated to teaching against pagans and sorcery.

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: If one reads the Pauline Epistle this day that what Paul is saying is that “the secret of being content in any and every situation” is the capacity to trust. This does not come easy to us despite the fact that at the heart of Christian Spirituality is the call to have hope and trust in God's mercy, wisdom and justice. Trusting in God's Providence and hope enables them to find a new freedom. However, there is more to trust than just believing that God is trustworthy. We have to act upon that belief. Trust involves a turning back to God, a real conversion of our whole lives to God, repenting of our sins and forgiving others. *Trust is a living faith. This type of surrender may be a worthy discipline this Lent when you consider that our resistance to God's rule often extends to our prayerful attempts to persuade the Lord to bless our plans and to meet our needs in the ways we deem best. This is juxtaposed to seeking God's will in prayer. This type of surrender calls us to a spirituality of a servant rather than a consumer.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Help us, O Lord, to have perfect trust in Your protecting love and strengthening power, so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for, living close to You, we shall see Your hand, Your purpose, Your will through all things. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “A humble understanding of yourself is a surer way to God than a profound searching after knowledge”. -- Thomas a’ Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE - Spend thirty minutes or longer writing down all the instances when you were in trouble or experiencing difficulty and how you were able to overcome it or get through it. Acknowledge where you perceive God's help, either direct or through other people. How did those moments teach you to trust in ways not previously realized?

Sun Feb 21	am: 91 pm: 103	Deut.26:4-10	Romans 10:8-13	Luke 4:1-13
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FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: The readings during the five Sundays of Lent provide a short course in the meaning of baptism, with each reading referring directly to part of the baptismal rite found in the Western Liturgical Tradition On this first Sunday in Lent, the readings focus on turning away from evil.

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: This first week of Lent we pray for a renewal of our lives as we know it is very difficult given the choices we are often faced with in this world. Today in the Gospel Jesus is facing some stiff choices, namely whether to accomplish his ministry in selfish, power-hungry ways. While that could be a way forward the reality is that in so doing he would reject his identity as God's Son. How many choices have we made in our lives that reflect our commitment as God's son or God's daughter? Is that evident to those who watch us, know us or work with us?

We hear the familiar drama of Jesus' is tempted by the devil. Jesus had received His being baptized according to Jewish custom. During His being baptized, Jesus heard His identity as the Beloved One. What we hear is both the three temptations proffered by the devil and the three affirmations by Jesus of Who He knew Himself to be. Could it be that these are less temptations, but more a context for Jesus to begin showing us who He truly is. Perhaps that is what temptations; they give us a glimpse of our selves depending on how we respond!

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord, please help me to learn to walk in the new nature You are creating in me, By the power of the Holy Spirit, please help me to resist temptation and grow through every trial that comes my way. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “He permits the devout to suffer evil either so that he may not depart from his right conscience or so that he may not fall into presumption from the strength and grace that have been given him.” -- St. John Damascus, Orthodox Faith: Book Two.

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Arrive for the Holy Eucharist early pondering the gift of receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in community with other Christians. During the prayers of the people, pray in a special way for those who are in need of resisting the temptation of this world and who have succumbed to the wiles of the evil one.

Mon Feb 22	am: 41, 52 pm: 44	Gen 37:1-11	1 Cor 1:1-19	Matt 25:31–46
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LENT I – Monday of the First Week of Lent

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE WEEK: Many people scurry for things to give up during Lent. Perhaps instead of doing something for the sake of fulfilling the commitment each of us can at the very least undertake a reflective Lent whereby we seek to be more aware of our behaviors and the effects they have on us and others and in turn our relationship with God. Lent I a time to reflect upon where we are on our journey and where we hope to be and what patterns will take us there.

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: The Gospel today is one of those sections of Scripture that we hope the Lord God does not mean in any literal or grammatical sense and that it is metaphorical. Perhaps that is not a bet one should make because Christ tells us plainly that when we see the suffering, the poor, and the neglected, we are seeing him.

The Gospel today compels us to recognize Christ in one another, where we might least expect to find him. Because God took on human flesh in the Incarnation, Jesus Christ united himself in some way to every single human being, *just because they're human!* In our Lord's solidarity with our human nature, we find the call to human solidarity that we all share in by virtue of our humanity as well as our baptism. Am I my brother's keeper?" *Yes,* seems to be Christ's answer and are obliged by faith and love to *serve* one another. Thus, when we see or hear of someone in need – whether it be for food, education or shelter we should recognize His presence in that person and respond generously just as He would if Jesus himself appeared as the needy person. ***The difficult lesson we must learn in this Lenten journey is that the Lord is among us now!***

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Please, Lord, give me the wisdom to know how to recognize and serve you. Make my journey back to you this Lent one of grace, humility and insight all for the love of you and my brothers and sisters in You. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “For in the Eucharist, Christ has no need of clothing, but a pure soul; but in our brothers and sisters, Christ requires much attention”. St. John Chrysostom *Homily 50 on Matthew*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Make today a day of fasting and abstinence. When you see a person in need don’t simply give money. Invite them to walk to the market and buy or give to them a sandwich, a bus pass, water, a sweater etc.

Tues Feb 23	am: 45 pm: 47, 48	Gen 37:12-24	1 Cor 1:20-31	Mk 1:14-28
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TUESDAY- LENT I - *St. Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr of Smyrna, 156*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Today, we remember Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey). He was a disciple of St. John the Apostle and friend of St. Ignatius of Antioch was a revered Christian leader during the first half of the second century. Polycarp was recognized as a Christian leader by all Asia Minor Christians—a strong fortress of faith and loyalty to Jesus Christ. His own strength emerged from his trust in God, even when events contradicted this trust. Living among pagans and under a government opposed to the new religion, he led and fed his flock. When his pursuers, sent by the ruler, found Polycarp, he commanded that they be given something to eat and drink, then asked them to give him an hour to pray; he stood and prayed, full of grace, for two hours, so that his captors repented that they had come against so venerable a man

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: In Mark 1:14-28 Jesus says, "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Some believed and the world called them foolish. They changed their daily routine to fully obey Jesus. In this section the word that resonates... *Repent!* What we are faced with is the fact that this begins the basic step to become fully a Kingdom person. If we take the call of Lent and the Scriptures to heart, first, we need to repent (cf. the Greek verb of the word μετανοια /metanoia). ‘Repent’ means for most people being sorry for something done in the past. That is not excluded here but metanoia looks much more to the future. Metanoia really means a radical change in one’s thinking, in this case, about the meaning and purpose of life and how that life is to be lived. Jesus is calling here for a radical conversion and to take on board his vision of life a vision that Polycarp was not willing to part with no matter what the cost.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: O sweet Savior Christ, in your undeserved love for us you were prepared to suffer the painful death of the cross: let me not be cold or even lukewarm in my love for you. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: ““I have been serving Christ for eighty-six years, and He has wronged me in nothing; how can I blaspheme my King Who has saved me?”.
--St. Polycarp

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Start making a list of your sins. Be aware of incidents of just and unjust exercise of authority. Strictly examine your own willingness to change. Make a list of the non-negotiable elements to your life and seek where the Lord is found on that list. use of power, authority, and responsibility.

Wed Feb 24	am: 119:49-72 pm: 49, 53	Gen 37:25-36	Corinthians 4:6-15	Matt 11:2-15
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Lent I *Saint Ethelbert of Kent, 616)*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Ethelbert was the first of the Anglo-Saxons to receive the Christian faith. He listened to the words of the Gospel translated to him by an interpreter, and when they were ended he said that he could not immediately abandon all that he held sacred, but the Christian missionaries were free to preach in his kingdom. He gave to them a piece of land between the walls and St. Martin's, where the monks established their monastery, which became the great Abbey of SS Peter and Paul. The king watched carefully the behavior of these Christians and became convinced of the truth of what they preached, so on Whitsunday 597, with many of his nobles and subjects, he received baptism in the river Stour. Ethelbert was to reign another twenty years after his conversion, and it is recorded that during that time he was always fair, never using pressure on any to become a Christian and only having greater affection for those who did, not showing them added favors. He died in 616 and was buried in SS. Peter and Paul

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: The lessons today are drawn from the Anglican and Orthodox lectionaries. “*Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another*” This is a surprising question coming from John the Baptist but not really upon closer inspection. Certainly John realized that the thought of being executed for the sake of righteousness and justice he could bear. But he could not bear the thought that he might have been wrong about Jesus. His one task was to prepare the way of the Lord. If he had gotten that wrong, his ministry, his life, was in vain.

On this Lenten journey we realize even the greatest, holiest saint’s experience deep struggles. All of experience seasons when we feel as if we’ve been abandoned. The remainder of this account reminds us that the Lord hears our pleas for help and is patient with our doubts. He does not condemn us but rather invites us to come deeper.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord, please, receive what is in my heart. Let me be inspired by the promise of your words. Guide me to be open to our call in my life and to make sacrifices this Lent that is required of me in order to be faithful to you and to those around me. Amen

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “When death comes, and we stand before God, no king can command Him, no authority can restrain Him, no riches can hire Him to wait past his appointed time even one moment of an hour. Therefore let us speak what we are bound to speak and do the deeds we are called to do. No empty time is allowed to any of us. -- *St. Thomas More*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Do something on behalf of those who are seeking a spiritual place invite them to share in the renewal process with you.

Thur Feb 25	am: 50, 59, 60 pm: 19, 46	Gen 39:1-23	1 Cor 2:14-3:15	Mark 2:1-12
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LENT I –

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: The Days of Lent remind us as we enter more deeply is that this journey of renewal is not just personal it is also communal. Being on one’s own in the journey can be dangerous as we are reminded in the sorry of Joseph from Genesis. If we can experience our journey in communion with others, it makes it so much clearer that we are on a journey together. When I can share my journey with a brother or sister in the Lord, I find that grace can flourish..

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: Again this week we are challenged by the idea of temptation but this time in the story of Joseph. His story reminds us that contrary to popular opinion temptation does not build character. Our ability to overcome temptation does not build character nor does it build will power. It is Godly character that stands this test and we need to be mindful of that in this story.

Joseph was prepared for the trap because of the depth of his spirituality. Temptation did not mold his character, it simply revealed his character. His character had already been formed through the faith and surrender he showed at the hands of his brothers. He showed his strength of character in the act that he trusted that God knows what he truly needed.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Father, without you we can do nothing. By your spirit help us to know what is right and to be eager in doing your will. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “There is no danger if our prayer is without words or reflection because the good success of prayer depends neither on words nor on study. It depends upon the simple raising of our minds to God, and the more simple and stripped of feeling it is, the surer it is”-- *St. Jane Frances de Chantal*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Reach out on behalf of children who have been disowned by the families orphaned or sold into child slavery. Donate to a fund that is providing help for people in such situations <http://www.helpstopchildslavery.org> and become an advocate to people you know who are detached from such awareness.

Fri Feb 26	am: 40, 54 pm: 51	Gen 40:1-23	1 Cor 3:16-23	Mt 5:20-26
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LENT I – *Ember Day*

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: The term “Ember Days” is derived from the Latin term *Quatuor Tempora*, which literally means “four times.” There are four sets of Ember Days each calendar year; three days each – Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Ember Days fall at the start of a new season and they are ordered as days of fast and abstinence. The significance of the days of the week are that Wednesday was the day Christ was betrayed, Friday was the day He was crucified, and Saturday was the day He was entombed. The purpose of Ember Days, “besides the general one intended by all prayer and fasting, was to thank God for the gifts of nature, to teach men to make use of them in moderation, and to assist the needy.” It is also a time for those seeking Holy Orders to make special submission to those under whom they were under authority

MEDITATION OF THE DAY: Today’s reading is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount. The key concept to ponder here is the idea of the Kingdom of God and the connection it has to a ministry of reconciliation. At first glance it appears that what is being asked here is just something difficult that is required of us, precisely to show that we are worthy or to pass the entrance exam to that Kingdom. The problem of course is that we are not worthy. There is no way we can demonstrate our worthiness. God imputes worthiness to us – through sanctifying grace, undeserved as it may be but it is within the fullness of God’s nature for “God is love” (1 John 4:16), or better translated, “God is self-giving”.

We are reminded again this holy season that the Kingdom of God is a realm characterized by self-giving, kenotic love. This season we must ponder can I truly be a kenotic lover of God and hold grudges and enmity with other people? Thus the theme this week again and again...REPENT!

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Creator of my life, renew me: bring me to new life in you. Touch me and make me feel whole again. Help me to see your love in the passion, death and resurrection of your son. Help me to observe Lent in a way that allows me to celebrate that love. Prepare me for these weeks of Lent as I feel both deep sorrow for my sins and your undying love for me. **Amen**

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: “of all things in the world' it is repentance which makes the greatest difference for it changes the whole man from sin to grace, from vicious habits to holy customs, from unchaste bodies to angelical souls, from swine to philosophers, from drunkenness to sober counsels: and God Himself lifts up the sinner from the grave to life, from his prison to a throne, from hell and the guilt of eternal torture, to heaven, and to a title never ceasing felicities” —Blessed Jeremy Taylor, *from the Great Exemplar*

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Commit today to an act of reconciliation to a person who we have brokenness with or who we have division with because of a different race, or culture, or religion. Show them the gift of reconciliation that comes from knowing Christ.

Sat Feb 27	am: 55 pm: 138, 139	Gen 41:1-13	1 Cor 4:1-7	Mark 2:23-3:6
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LENT I – St Alnoth, Hermit and Martyr of Stowe, (700)

LITURGICAL THEME FOR THE DAY: Today we remember the life of Alnoth, Alnoth led the life of a hermit in the woods of Stowe near Bugbrooke and there in his solitude he was murdered by some robbers, who infested the wooded country. They could not have killed Alnoth for his wealth because he had none, and the local people were sure that it was hatred of his faith and holiness of life that had motivated his murderers. He was regarded as a martyr and his tomb was a place of pilgrimage for centuries, those visiting it attesting to miracles and answered petitions. He was a man of great piety and, although he was an unlettered serf, he practiced his religion with simple devotion. Such men tend to attract to themselves bullying persecution by the more worldly

MEDITATION OF THE DAY:

We see in the reading of today’s gospel that being mindful of who we are, and what we say we are about can be held to close scrutiny by those who wish to doubt and cast criticism. In today’s account from Mark, we see that the fact that Jesus failed to observe the Sabbath in the manner expected seems is seen as most serious. The other incidents, like not fasting or eating with disreputable people, raised some eyebrows but didn't necessarily amount to a sin. Keeping the Sabbath holy was, however, commanded by God - and if Jesus failed to that, then his claims about himself and his mission could be questioned.

What do we do each day that calls into question our claims to be a follower of Jesus? Do the words we say in anger resemble grace or less than grace? Do the way we value persons versus objects reflect people who truly see the worth and dignity of other people? While it is easy to critique the Pharisees for their approach to Jesus, we must ask do we give people who are possible seekers, reason not to consider the faith because of the disconnect that goes on in our valuing the faith?

Dallas Willard in his excellent work *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, maintains that many of us struggle with following the mandates of Christ because we're trying to do it part-way. We think that we can keep most of our lives the same as others around us and just follow a few key commands, picking and choosing as we may see fit. This approach is unworkable because the commands are not minimum focused but seek to maximize what is required of us. However, if we were to set our hearts on full commitment and humbly seek the grace that comes from the Spirit and we live completely differently.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Lord Jesus, your ways are not our ways. Help us to joyfully seek to follow your ways with our whole being. Help us to discern how and why we hold back. We thank you that you offer us rest and wisdom as we seek to become more perfect in all our ways.

ANCIENT WISDOM/PRESENT GRACE: "When I contemplate my Savior thus, I love the Lord, and there is a reverent adoration in that love, I love Christ, and there is a mysterious admiration in that love, but I love Jesus, and there is a tender compassion in that love, and I am content to suffer with Him, and to suffer for Him, rather than to see any diminution of His glory, by my prevarication."—Blessed John Donne.

LENTEN DISCIPLINE – Make today a day to invite a person who is doubtful about the Christian witness to your home for dinner and fellowship. Also invite them to church for the Second Sunday of Lent to show them that you care about them body and soul!