



Monday, March 12, 2012

**READ-** The Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9

Once again, the people grumble against Moses about their desert miseries – specifically the food they must eat. As a punishment, the text says that God sent poisonous snakes to bite the people and they died. In response to Moses' prayer, God has mercy and offers an antidote for the snake bites.

**REFLECT-**

- The people interpreted their encounter with poisonous snakes as punishment from God for their grumbling. Many in our day interpret the destruction terrorist attacks, earthquakes and tsunamis as God's judgment upon us. How do Jesus' teachings about the nature of God guide us in this regard?

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to accept with gratitude the many ways in which you bless us and seek your presence through hardship and difficulty. Amen.

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

**READ-** The Epistle: Ephesians 2:1-10

The writer of Ephesians holds in tension here the forgiveness of our sins wholly through God's grace and the natural response of the forgiven to do good works. The new life given to us through Jesus' sacrifice empowers us to live into the joy of God's kingdom here and now.

**REFLECT-**

- We need regularly reminders that there is nothing we can do to earn God's mercy. Yet we also need to remember that as forgiven people, empowered by God's Spirit, we are called to do works of compassion and justice in our daily lives in grateful response to all Jesus has done for us.

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to be aware of opportunities I have today to be an instrument of your love, care and compassion for others and to take the time to do so. Amen.

Wednesday, March 14, 2012

**READ-** The Gospel: John 3:14-21

This passage is a continuation of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, a Jewish leader who came to Jesus at night seeking to understand Jesus' message. It alludes to our Old Testament passage with the snakes and Jesus predicts his death on the cross. Jesus lays out clearly our choice – believe and have life, or reject him and face condemnation.

**REFLECT-**

- Our belief in Jesus Christ and his saving acts of mercy is our first step in accepting God's salvation. We must believe and accept Christ as our Savior. Once we believe, our life must change to reflect Jesus' commandments of loving God and our neighbor with our whole heart.

**PRAY-**

Father, I give you thanks for sending your Son to teach us, love us, and to give his life so that we might be restored to that good and perfect relationship with you. Amen.

Thursday, March 15, 2012

**READ-** The Psalm: Psalm 107:17-22

The psalmist affirms God's everlasting love for his people and then cites examples of God's care for those who are hungry, thirsty, suffering and oppressed. It reflects beautifully God's blessing and care for the Israelites, bringing them out of slavery, through the desert, into a place they can now call home and live in peace and abundance.

**REFLECT-**

- In what ways has God blessed you abundantly? What good things in your life do you often take for granted? How has God lifted you up in times of hardship and pain? Take time to give thanks today.

**PRAY-**

O God, thank you for all the ways you love and care for me and for the world. Help me to reflect that love today in my words and actions. Amen.

Friday, March 16, 2012

**ACT-**

**Disciplines for Lent:**

• **Gratitude**

Today I am most grateful to God for \_\_\_\_\_.

• **Fasting**

Today I will give up \_\_\_\_\_ in solidarity with those who are in need.

• **Repentance**

Today I ask forgiveness for \_\_\_\_\_ and ask God's guidance in turning away from that sin.

• **Giving**

Today I set aside \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my abundance to give to someone who is suffering or in need through \_\_\_\_\_.