Bread for the Journey

Daily Readings and Prayers on the Revised Common Lectionary

Monday, September 2, 2013

READ - The Psalter: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

One of the most beautiful and comforting passages in all the psalms assures us that God knows us more intimately than any other human possibly can. God planned for us to be born, put us together in our mother's womb, and has a plan for our lives. He never leaves us alone.

REFLECT –

- If ever there were a passage of scripture which affirms the sanctity of unborn life, this one does it with grace and beauty. We are part of God's will and plan even as "unformed substance" (vs. 16). Every living creature is precious to God. How does this scripture inform (or not) your ideas about abortion?

PRAY -

O God who knew me before I was ever formed and who is with me in each breath I take, I praise you for your love and care in my life. Amen.

Tuesday, September 3, 2013

READ - Old Testament: Jeremiah 18:1-11

God uses a familiar image a potter forming a pot out of clay to show his prophet Jeremiah how he plans to deal with the disobedient people of Judah if they don't turn back to God and live obediently, allowing God's will to form and shape their lives.

REFLECT –

- If you apply the metaphor of your life as clay in God's hands, are you really allowing God to form and shape your life? Do you pray often, read your Bible and actively seek out God's will for your life? Do you try to live obediently each day? How pliable is your life in God's hands?

PRAY -

Lord, don't give up on me and toss me aside like a spoiled lump of clay. Keep me shaped according to your will so that my life may be a vessel of your grace and mercy to others. Amen.

Wednesday, September 4, 2013

READ - The Epistle: Philemon 1 -21

This tiny epistle of Paul's appeals to Philemon, the owner of a slave named Onesimus who had run away, to give Onesimus his freedom in repayment of a debt he owes Paul. Paul, who is in prison, has converted Onesimus to the faith and asks that once Philemon gives him his freedom, that Onesimus be allowed to return and continue working with Paul.

REFLECT –

- It's interesting that Paul does not challenge the systemic evil of slavery in their society as wrong. He only asks that Philemon forgive Onesimus for running away and allow him to return a free man to help Paul continue his ministry from prison. What might this say to us about dealing with the systemic evils in our society today?

PRAY -

Lord, help me to do whatever I can, however small it may seem, to speak out and help change to happen where there is evil around me. Amen.

Thursday, September 5, 2013

READ - The Gospel: Luke 14:25-33

Jesus did not sugar-coat the challenges that awaited those who chose to be his disciples. Following Christ must be their first priority and that will often mean separation from friends and family and giving up material possessions to share with others who are in need. It is not easy.

REFLECT –

- For many of us, one of our main priorities in life is taking care of our family – spouse, children, elderly parents – and some of our greatest joy (and pain) comes from those relationships. Americans hold their material possessions closely. Jesus is demanding that we make following him our first priority in life and these other priorities must take a back seat to serving him.

PRAY -

O God, help me to make your priorities my priorities. Help me to live into Jesus' commands to love one another with my time and resources. Amen.

Friday, September 6, 2013

ACT -

Focus Verse: Philemon 6

I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.

As you go about your day today, be intentional about doing good and sharing what you have with those whom you meet. Really look at the person who rings up your groceries and smile. Listen to your coworker or neighbor who may aggravate you and have compassion for what may be going on in their life. Buy a meal and give it the man standing on the street corner holding the sign, "Will work for food." As you do these small things, offer up a prayer to God. The scripture says he will be pleased.