

March 7, 2021 | Third Sunday of Lent: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/030721-YearB.cfm>

Ex 20:1-17

Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11

1 Cor 1:22-25

Jn 2:13-25

By Br. Patrick Travers

Blessings to you all as we approach this 3rd Sunday of Lent! Hopefully we are able to continue growing closer to the Lord as He walks with us on this Lenten journey. And as we look to “Link the Lectionary to Justice & Peace,” today’s readings offer much for our reflection!

Certainly the Gospel passage is one that likely sticks in our minds, perhaps even from our childhood. On only a few occasions in the Gospels do we encounter the Lord Jesus so full of passion and emotion as He drives out the “money changers” and those selling animals in the temple with a whip. He turns over the tables, spilling the coins, and tells them to “stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”

Sometimes we might wish the Lord would use this passion and energy to respond to the injustice we discover in the world around us. Perhaps when we look around, we might think that God is an indifferent bystander. He seems to not do anything; we only hear silence.

I have found myself pondering the message of Jesus in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.” (Mt 5:6) What does it mean to be satisfied, and when will it happen? Do we perhaps hunger and thirst for justice in a world in which injustice seems to rule the day? Left to its own devices, the world will only see power as the pathway to overcome injustice. How does God respond to this reality?

In the second reading, St. Paul seems to give some insight into God’s way of responding: “Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified.” (1Cor 1:22)

How can the Crucified Christ be an answer? How does his meekness and such an unjust humiliation solve anything? It only seems to reinforce the prevailing power structure. Yet, St. Paul insists that this is the true “wisdom” that will satisfy those who hunger for justice.

As St. Paul says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.” (1Cor 1:18,25)

Jesus Christ, “the power of God,” is God’s response to our situation. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16)

The wisdom of the Crucified Cross is a mystery that leads us ultimately to the love that God has for his fallen children, who fail to see and treat each other as brothers and sisters of a just Father. Only a sacrificial love could break the cycle of vengeance and “eye-for-an-eye” sense of justice.

This Lent, let us place ourselves before the Lord and his “wisdom,” and try to enter the mystery of Love that took on our injustice, in order that those of us who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” might be truly satisfied.

God bless you all.

From Peoria, Illinois, Br. Patrick Travers studied civil engineering and returned to his faith near the end of college. He went on a random mission trip and discovered a group of brothers, called the Sodalits, a mix of consecrated laymen and priests. After living 10 years in Peru, he moved to Philly four years ago to work in college ministry with Penn & Drexel students.