Living Faith
Daily Catholic Devotions

June 14-20, 2020

“I am with you ALWAYS...”
Matthew 28:20
Imagine if you had been part of the crowd listening to Jesus when he tells them that they are to eat his flesh and drink his blood if they are to have eternal life! Would you have been tempted to join with those disciples who said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” (verse 60).

The early Christians knew that it was difficult, as difficult as accepting that their savior had been crucified. Yet the apostles and their disciples were adamant that, as St. Paul writes, in the cup and the bread, we participate in the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Since 1264, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. As in every generation, some Catholics today may struggle with the Church’s teaching on the Real Presence. Yet for 2,000 years, we turn to Jesus and say with St. Peter, “You have the words of eternal life” (verse 68).

Lord, thank you for the great gift of the Holy Eucharist.
Greg Erlandson
Resisting Retaliation

When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. Matthew 5:39

In Jesus’ time, masters could not lose face if they were to retain power. Protocols were followed, even when disciplining servants. It was customary for a master to strike a servant’s right cheek by hitting the back of his right hand across it. But if that servant then turned his left cheek, as Jesus suggested, the master was judged powerless. It was physically impossible to use the back of his right hand to strike the servant’s left cheek. Whether or not the master struck again, his authority was diminished by the servant’s gesture. The gospel message of nonviolent resistance is as relevant as ever in this age of escalating tensions.

Consider what Pope Francis has said: “When victims of violence are able to resist the temptation to retaliate, they become the most credible promoters of nonviolent peacemaking. In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions.”

Help us, Lord, to always seek the path of peace.

Gail Goleas

1 Kings 21:1-16 • Psalm 5:2-7
Matthew 5:38-42
Grace and Presence

So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:48

What does it mean to be perfect as God is perfect? It would be so much easier if being perfect meant that we were just to follow a list of rules, like maybe the Ten Commandments or the Catechism of the Catholic Church. But God’s perfection is so much bigger than a list of rules.

What do we know for sure about God? God is love. God is creative. God is a communion of persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is merciful. God is willing to die for us so that we can be free from sin and oppression. God is present with us.

So much of what God is, we also can be, with his grace.

Elizabeth Duffy

1 Kings 21:17-29 • Psalm 51:3-6, 11, 16
Matthew 5:43-48
### Private Fasting

When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites.

Matthew 6:16

One of the books I often use is the *Concordance of the Bible*. It lists Scriptural words that are repeated multiple times. I checked the word *hypocrite* and found that it is listed over 20 times in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus used that word on various occasions, as in today’s Sermon on the Mount about the teaching of fasting. A hypocrite is one who gives a false appearance of virtue. So Jesus warns about not fasting in a hypocritical way, for then the fasting has lost its value.

Fasting, which I believe is a very good habit, is something that takes place quietly, just between us and the Lord. If we walk around in a gloomy, ill-lit mood, we may be trying to attract someone’s attention and then explain our holiness. In such situations, we are not fasting for God but casting for compliments. Private and personal fasting is good to highlight our prayers. It also teaches us the value and strength that comes to us through self-control. It is good to fast in any manner you choose, just don’t make it gloomy.

Fr. James McKarns

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2 Kings 2:1, 6-14 • Psalm 31:20-21, 24
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday, June 18

Prayers Answered

Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:8

If this gospel verse is true, it begs the questions: Why ask God for anything? If the Lord already knows our needs, why should we bother to pray?

Many of us approach God in prayer with a list of wishes. We know that God doesn’t always give us what we ask for, but if we trust that God knows our needs, then we can learn a great deal by what he actually does give us. We might ask God to spare us from difficult people and find that he increases our compassion for them instead. We might ask God to solve our problems and find that he renews our strength to face them.

So, why do we pray? Maybe it’s an opportunity to let God show us what our needs are. Maybe prayer allows us to accept with gratitude and humility whatever help God sees fit to give.

Father, you know what I need. Please show me.

Karla Manternach

Sirach 48:1-14 • Psalm 97:1-7
Matthew 6:7-15
Mandatory Love

In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.  1 John 4:10-11

Okay, so, let me get this straight: we must love one another? That’s a pretty tough assignment that John is handing down today. It was also handed to us by Jesus as the second half of the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:29-31). But don’t John and Jesus know that this person lied to me? That this other one stole from me? That my former best friend betrayed me?

Yes, Jesus knows. He knows all about us. God loves us all and, “sent his Son as expiation for our sins.”

So, yes, Jesus came for you and for that person who lied to you, for the thief, for your best friend and literally everyone else. Loving one another is not easy or meant to be temporary; it’s the work of a lifetime. May we pray today for the strength to bring the love of God to others, even if they subsequently might ask, “Okay, so, let me get this straight, THAT person loves me?”

Terence Hegarty
Letting Go, Letting God

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers… Luke 2:46

I lost one of my toddler twins once at a kite festival. It was only a couple minutes before I spotted her, but those were some of the longest minutes of my life.

Not long after, when I read about Mary losing God’s son for three days, I cannot tell you the relief I felt! Mary felt real to me. I wasn’t alone in the often overwhelming feelings about motherhood, about love.

Today’s gospel serves as an important reminder for any one of us who has ever wanted to control someone we love. We cannot hold them back or divert them from their path. Jesus’ mission was to do his heavenly Father’s will. When he goes missing for three days, it is only natural for him to be in the Temple, his Father’s house! Where else would he be?

A big part of love is letting go, giving people the room they need to become their truest self. We can trust God to take care of our beloved. They are his beloved too.

Kristin Armstrong
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