



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Father, You have taught us to overcome our sins by prayer, fasting, and works of mercy. When we are discouraged by our weakness, give us confidence in Your love. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

God has revealed Himself to Noah and his family, then to Abraham and his clan. Now, we read about His revelation to Moses and a nation born from slavery.

With each revelation comes a covenant. With each covenant, comes a sign. The new covenant is with a Holy Nation, a people set apart. The Hebrew people, once in slavery, have found a God of love who will be their God and they will be His people.

Unlike in the time of Abraham or Noah, this covenant is not based on the faith of the people. Rather, it is based on a lack of faith and God's promise to restore a communion with His people through the Law. The Law is the sign of the New Covenant to come.

Thus, the Ten Commandments, found in today's reading, come directly from God and for a people who lack faith. God understands their wandering hearts and so gives them a rule of life with commandments to maintain communion and fellowship with the Lord.

These commandments are the sign of the new covenant with God's people.

Question

How has the law helped you stay on the right spiritual path?

Commentary

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

The first three Sundays of Lent have focused on covenants and signs.

St. Paul addresses the Corinthians with the words, "Jews demand signs and Greeks demand wisdom."

Always seeking signs to show us God's power and love, even in covenants, really shows a lack of faith. Seeking signs is a sign of doubt.

Only seeking wisdom, as the Greeks did, also shows a lack of faith. A person who thinks that mental moments of genius are the answers to finding God within fails to understand that God is always present even when we aren't alert.

The philosophical (study of wisdom) pursuit of God and accepting some miraculous signs in your life are fine, and encouraged, but will always be insufficient compared to true belief.

True wisdom and true signs aren't found - they are given by God. These gifts aren't for the intelligent, the rich, or the elite. They are for all who believe.

The Spirit of Wisdom and powerful Sign of God are found in Christ who is given for all people. He is a gift, unearned! Faith in Christ is the answer to all who seek signs and wisdom.

Question

Are you a person who needs signs or sources of wisdom to help your faith?

This Weekend

The RCIA Readings follow the A Year Cycle.
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Third Sunday of Lent

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Commentary

Gospel: John 2:13-25

The covenant that was established with Moses included the commandments as a sign of God's presence with His people. In addition to the commandments, a tent was designed by God and made by His chosen people to contain the presence of the Lord. Within this tent, God would dwell with His people.

During the reign of King David, a temple would be built to house the presence of the Lord. It would replace the tent of Moses. This is the type of temple that Jesus entered in today's reading of the Gospel.

In a previous chapter of the Gospel of John, we read, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt (literally, pitched His tent) among us. The presence of the Lord would be found in Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Jesus, the presence and full revelation of God, would pitch his tent (His very being) within a new temple - not made of human hands, but by God.

He would replace His temple with living stones. We are the living stones of His living temple. He is the sign of the power and wisdom of God who pitches His tent within us.

Question

Can you describe a time when you felt Christ "pitch His tent" within you?

This Week's Task

Take a few minutes this week and quiet yourself. Ask the Lord to dwell within you, His living temple. You may choose to repeat this prayer from the late Bishop Robert Brom of San Diego:

Come, Lord Jesus!

Live in my mind.

Dwell in my heart.

Be my companion on the journey of life.

Prayer

The leader invites participants to pass around a lighted candle. As it is passed, each member offers a prayer request for a particular concern in his/her life (the death of a loved one, the sickness of a relative, loss of a job, etc). After the prayer request, the one holding the candle will say:

Christ our Light,

Sign of the Power

and Wisdom of God,

Dwell within Your temple.

The leader will then guide the group in praying Psalm 19.

Psalm

Response: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul;
the decree of the Lord is trustworthy,
giving wisdom to the simple.

Response: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the command of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eye.

Response: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the Lord are true,
all of them just.

Response: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

They are more precious than gold,
than a heap of purest gold;
sweeter also than syrup
or honey from the comb.

Response: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

Conclude with an OUR FATHER