

DAILY REFLECTIONS (WEEK OF 02/27/11 - 03/05/11)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2011: It is printed in the bulletin.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28

A user's guide to the Ten Commandments

"The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice," a church sign stated. Admittedly we sometimes do pick and choose among them, nonchalantly passing over ones that hit too close to home. But most of the time it may be that we just haven't thought through how they apply to our own lived experience. Here's one way to rediscover the Commandments and be more conscious of living them. Create a chart with four columns. In the first, list the Ten Commandments. In the second, write something from Jesus' life and teaching that relates directly or indirectly to that Commandment. In the third, prayerfully write your own paraphrase of the Commandment. In the fourth, list specific ways that you can incorporate the spirit of the Commandment into your daily life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 17:20-24; Mark 10:17-27*

"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

Pay attention to the fine print

The word *everyman* (gender specific as it may be) has come to mean an ordinary person or a representative of us all. Saint Peter seems to hold such a position. He's the apostle who blurts out what most of us are thinking but are too polite or ashamed to say. Peter complains, as Jesus talks of coming rewards, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus' reply is directed toward us as much as to Peter, when we want to know what we've gotten ourselves into. Jesus promises a return, even in this life, of a "hundredfold" of what we have given up—and then adds "with persecutions." Jesus is up-front about both the high cost of being a disciple *and* the satisfaction of doing in our daily life what he would have done.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 35:1-12; Mark 10:28-31*

"To keep from wickedness is pleasing to the Lord, and to forsake unrighteousness is an atonement."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2

Follow the leader

When you hear or read a gospel story it can be easy to overlook the small but important clues the writers are giving you. As a college scripture professor once said, "Every word in the gospels is there for a reason." For example, in Mark's account of Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, when Christ was trying to make clear just what following him will involve for his apostles, we hear that Jesus "was walking ahead of them"; later he "called them" together to set the record straight. That Jesus was in front of the group doesn't only mean the apostles were keeping a respectful distance; it indicates rather that *he is the one to follow*. His calling together of his disciples says *he's calling you, too* to follow him wherever he may lead you.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 36:1, 4-5a, 10-17; Mark 10:32-45*

"The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized."

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

FEAST OF KATHARINE DREXEL, VIRGIN

Hold nothing back

Saint Katharine Drexel (1858-1955) could serve as a role model for wealthy philanthropists such as Bill Gates and Warren Buffet today who have pledged to give away half their fortunes. Drexel came from a wealthy family who had instilled in her the idea that wealth is simply loaned to us and should be put in the service of others. But when she petitioned Pope Leo XIII for missionaries to staff the American Indian missions she was financing as a layperson, he suggested she become a missionary herself. And she did, dedicating not only her inheritance but her very life in service to Native Americans and African Americans. Time for us to pony up.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 42:15-25; Mark 10:46-52*

"Go; your faith has made you well."

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

You have much to offer

The World Day of Prayer (WDP, www.worlddayofprayer.net) is a worldwide movement organized by Christian women who observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. This year's theme comes from WDP women in Chile and asks, "How many loaves have you?" In other words, *What are your gifts? What can you share? and With whom?* These are important and timely questions to ponder, especially because these days many of us are fixated on what we *don't* have, what we *wish* we had, or what we *used* to have. It is good to be reminded that as long as we are still breathing, we have a loaf—and probably many loaves—to share.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 44:1, 9-13; Mark 11:11-26*

"He was teaching and saying, 'Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'?" "

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Why do you ask?

Jesus did not suffer fools gladly, even when they happened to be the most powerful members of the religious establishment—the chief priests, scribes, and elders. It is clear that their sly questioning was based not on a genuine desire to learn but rather on a wish to cleverly entrap Jesus with a trick question. Jesus turns the tables on them on more than one occasion, and these gospel stories serve as cautionary tales to all of us never to confuse cleverness with genuine truth-seeking. The truth will set us free. The rest is game-playing.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 51:12c-20; Mark 11:27-33*

"By what authority are you doing these things?"