

Lenten Reflections

March 20, 2020



St Francis Receiving the Stigmata – El Greco – Public Domain

<https://art.thewalters.org/detail/6457/saint-francis-receiving-the-stigmata-2/>

Today's first reading calls us to return to the Lord, our God, that our sins and our guilt have separated us from Him. God tells us that He will heal us and love us freely. We should find encouragement in these words but understand that before we can be healed and loved, we must recognize our brokenness and our need for help. God can't work on our wounds unless we show them to Him, just like with a Doctor, if we hide our sickness and symptoms from them, they cannot do what they need to heal us of our ailment.

This experience of knowing our wounds can be painful and difficult. We don't want to feel weak and powerless; we want to be self-sustaining and to be able to take care of ourselves. This is how we were made though - we are in constant need of help from God and others. This Lent may God help us to know our weaknesses and to not become sad or despair because of them, but to trust in God, that He loves us, and that He can give us the grace to overcome them.

*Brother Tom Junis, Campus Ministry Volunteer,
Salesian in Formation*

All are invited to join Br. Tom each Monday night for Bible Study, 8:00pm in the Student Union Building, Castleview Conference Room

Friday of the Third Week of Lent

Lectionary: 241

Reading 1 [HOS 14:2-10](#)

Thus says the LORD:

Return, O Israel, to the LORD, your God;
you have collapsed through your guilt.
Take with you words,
and return to the LORD;
Say to him, "Forgive all iniquity,
and receive what is good, that we may render
as offerings the bullocks from our stalls.
Assyria will not save us,
nor shall we have horses to mount;
We shall say no more, 'Our god,'
to the work of our hands;
for in you the orphan finds compassion."

I will heal their defection, says the LORD,
I will love them freely;
for my wrath is turned away from them.
I will be like the dew for Israel:
he shall blossom like the lily;
He shall strike root like the Lebanon cedar,
and put forth his shoots.
His splendor shall be like the olive tree
and his fragrance like the Lebanon cedar.
Again they shall dwell in his shade
and raise grain;
They shall blossom like the vine,
and his fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

Ephraim! What more has he to do with idols?
I have humbled him, but I will prosper him.
"I am like a verdant cypress tree"—
Because of me you bear fruit!

Let him who is wise understand these things;
let him who is prudent know them.
Straight are the paths of the LORD,
in them the just walk,
but sinners stumble in them.

Responsorial Psalm [81:6C-8A, 8BC-9, 10-11AB, 14 AND 17](#)

R. (see 11 and 9a) **I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.**

An unfamiliar speech I hear:

“I relieved his shoulder of the burden;
his hands were freed from the basket.
In distress you called, and I rescued you.”

R. **I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.**

“Unseen, I answered you in thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.
Hear, my people, and I will admonish you;
O Israel, will you not hear me?”

R. **I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.**

“There shall be no strange god among you
nor shall you worship any alien god.
I, the LORD, am your God
who led you forth from the land of Egypt.”

R. **I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.**

“If only my people would hear me,
and Israel walk in my ways,
I would feed them with the best of wheat,
and with honey from the rock I would fill them.”

R. **I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.**

Verse Before The Gospel [MT 4:17](#)

Repent, says the Lord;
the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Gospel [MK 12:28-34](#)

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him,
“Which is the first of all the commandments?”

Jesus replied, “The first is this:

Hear, O Israel!

The Lord our God is Lord alone!

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
and with all your strength.*

The second is this:

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

There is no other commandment greater than these.”

The scribe said to him, “Well said, teacher.

You are right in saying,

He is One and there is no other than he.

*And to love him with all your heart,
with all your understanding,*

*with all your strength,
and to love your neighbor as yourself*
is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”
And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding,
he said to him,
“You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”
And no one dared to ask him any more questions.