

Lenten Reflections

March 24, 2020



St Francis Receiving the Stigmata – El Greco – Public Domain

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

When I saw the readings I was assigned, my first thought was that it was a sign. Today, March 24th, is my youngest son's birthday and both the first reading and the Gospel deal with things my children and I are passionate about.

The first reading tells us to trust and to use our common sense. Ezekiel trusted the angel when he was told to walk in the water right up to the point where the river flowed, and wading was impossible. He could have swum but the angel wanted to show him what the river could do so he took him to the riverbank. Here the fresh water turned to saltwater and along the banks fruit trees grew, all kinds of animals lived, and the river was the home of fish, all things necessary to sustain life. Ezekiel understood how little things like brooks eventually flow into great rivers and can do great things. So too, our small actions can have the same effect. We cannot always know how what we do or say can affect someone. Simple words and actions can have great impact.

In addition, the Gospel really resonated with me because I am a firm believer in “the spirit of the law over the letter of the law.”

Jesus cured a sick man on the Sabbath, a direct violation of the “letter of the law” but what was more important, helping someone or obeying an arbitrary rule? As educators, it is sometimes necessary for us to bend the rules in order to respect the spirit of the law. Our motto is “students first;” however, that doesn't mean, as some students believe, that we give our students anything they want. It does mean that we have to do what is in the best interest of the student, and that may mean adjusting rules if necessary, in order to accommodate the spirit of the law.

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Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Lectionary: 245

Reading [1EZ 47:1-9, 12](#)

The angel brought me, Ezekiel,
back to the entrance of the temple of the LORD,
and I saw water flowing out
from beneath the threshold of the temple toward the east,
for the façade of the temple was toward the east;
the water flowed down from the right side of the temple,
south of the altar.

He led me outside by the north gate,
and around to the outer gate facing the east,
where I saw water trickling from the right side.

Then when he had walked off to the east
with a measuring cord in his hand,
he measured off a thousand cubits
and had me wade through the water,
which was ankle-deep.

He measured off another thousand
and once more had me wade through the water,
which was now knee-deep.

Again he measured off a thousand and had me wade;
the water was up to my waist.

Once more he measured off a thousand,
but there was now a river through which I could not wade;
for the water had risen so high it had become a river
that could not be crossed except by swimming.

He asked me, "Have you seen this, son of man?"

Then he brought me to the bank of the river, where he had me sit.
Along the bank of the river I saw very many trees on both sides.

He said to me,

"This water flows into the eastern district down upon the Arabah,
and empties into the sea, the salt waters, which it makes fresh.

Wherever the river flows,
every sort of living creature that can multiply shall live,
and there shall be abundant fish,
for wherever this water comes the sea shall be made fresh.
Along both banks of the river, fruit trees of every kind shall grow;
their leaves shall not fade, nor their fruit fail.
Every month they shall bear fresh fruit,
for they shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary.
Their fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine."

Responsorial Psalm [46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9](#)

R. (8) The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

God is our refuge and our strength,
an ever-present help in distress.

Therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken
and mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

R. The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God,
the holy dwelling of the Most High.

God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed;
God will help it at the break of dawn.

R. The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

The LORD of hosts is with us;
our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

Come! behold the deeds of the LORD,
the astounding things he has wrought on earth.

R. The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

Verse Before The Gospel [PS 51:12A, 14A](#)

A clean heart create for me, O God;
give me back the joy of your salvation.

Gospel [JN 5:1-16](#)

There was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep Gate
a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes.

In these lay a large number of ill, blind, lame, and crippled.

One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there
and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him,
“Do you want to be well?”

The sick man answered him,

“Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool
when the water is stirred up;
while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me.”

Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your mat, and walk.”

Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked.

Now that day was a sabbath.

So the Jews said to the man who was cured,

“It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.”

He answered them, “The man who made me well told me,

‘Take up your mat and walk.’”

They asked him,

“Who is the man who told you, ‘Take it up and walk?’”

The man who was healed did not know who it was,

for Jesus had slipped away, since there was a crowd there.
After this Jesus found him in the temple area and said to him,
“Look, you are well; do not sin any more,
so that nothing worse may happen to you.”
The man went and told the Jews
that Jesus was the one who had made him well.
Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus
because he did this on a sabbath.