



## WEEK 5 & 6: MARCH 30 – APRIL 9, 2022

day 29 – “Abba”

### READINGS:

IS 49:8-15 | PSALM 145 | JN 5:17- 30

### REFLECTION QUOTE:

“I will never forget you.” (IS 49:15)

### OVERVIEW:

I believe that there are certain words we use that call us into a deeper level of spirituality. One of those words is name Jesus utters for His father in heaven, “Abba.” Author Brennan Manning wrote, “My identity as Abba’s child is not an abstraction or a tap dance into religiosity. It is the core truth of my existence.” By using the same word for God as Jesus did, we are reminding ourselves that we are forever a child of God, and He will never leave us. In your life you know there is nothing a loving parent wouldn’t do for their child.

Another beautiful relation to Christ also happens when we are inspired to speak as He did. We see that Jesus made everything else about the Father and not about Himself. Jesus worked to lead people to the Father not to Himself. He desired eternal salvation so they could return to God and live eternity in His presence. His living example is the daily reminder that no matter what happens, this world is only temporary.

### ACTION:

Are there any other words in scripture or faith you have heard that sound “interesting” or you don’t understand? Look them up and learn. Also, tonight before bed, get on your knees to pray, and simply hold your hands out and say, “Thank you, Abba for loving me as your own.”

### REFERENCE:

“When we pray to the Father, we are in communion with him and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Then we know and recognize him with a new sense of wonder. The first phrase of the Our Father is a blessing of adoration before it is a supplication. For it is the glory of God that we should recognize him as “Father,” the true God. We give him thanks for having revealed his name to us, for the gift of believing in it, and for the indwelling of his Presence in us.”

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church #2781)*



## day 30 - "Why?"

### READINGS:

EX 32:7- 14 | PSALM 106 | JN 5:31-47

### REFLECTION QUOTE:

"...I do not accept human praise; moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you." (JN 5:41-42)

### OVERVIEW:

This big buzz word in business development right now is "Why." Organizations are reminded that people must understand why you are in the business you are in and what makes you different than everyone else. In consulting I especially remind ministry leaders to make sure your ministry is not about what you want, instead make sure it is about God using you to bring others to Him.

Our faith and desire to live like Christ is no different. Why are you doing what you do? If we look at our actions sometimes, we will see that we did things because we wanted others to see what we did. Maybe we were bitter we weren't recognized for the nice things or contribution we gave to someone else. That shouldn't happen if to please other humans. The "Why" to what we do is simply to please God and be whole.

### ACTION:

Think about why you do all you do in worship, charity, and love? Make sure it's because it is right, and the glory comes from doing His will.

### REFERENCE:

"Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed is contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason."

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church #151)*

## day 31 - "Persecution"

### READINGS:

WIS 2:1A,12-22 | PSALM 34 | JN 7:1-2,10,25-30



## REFLECTION QUOTE:

"With violence and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience." (Wisdom 2:19)

## OVERVIEW:

When you commit to living a life of faith, there will be haters. People who want to tear you down or even harm you for loving Jesus. This has happened since forever... so we shouldn't think today's times are any different. It does make you think though... are you willing to stand up for what you believe, or does it make you quietly backdown to retreat into silence?

Persecution is a relative term. I would guess those in countries where Christians are being murdered certainly wouldn't feel that people saying bad things about us warrants true understanding of what it means to be persecuted. While there is truth to that, no matter where we live, we are being tested on what we believe and even mocked for having those beliefs. It comes at us in many forms from many people. Persecution doesn't always come from the outside, sometimes it can come from those we love or those even in our own church.

And if we are responding to persecution, are we doing it with love or are feeding into the same evil and hate it was intended to hurt you with? Let me just remind you what Jesus Himself said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, the kingdom of heaven is theirs..." and that's a pretty great reward.

## ACTION:

What areas of your faith and understanding of what you believe do you need to become stronger in to handle the moments you are challenged? Find ways to become educated and pray to the Holy Spirit for the gifts of Courage and Wisdom to guide you.

## REFERENCE:

"The world never burned a casual Christian at the stake."

*(John R. Rice)*

day 32 - "Can't Stop"

## READINGS:

JER 11:18-20 | PSALM 7 | JN 7:40-53

## REFLECTION QUOTE:



“O LORD, my God, in you I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and rescue me, Lest I become like the lion's prey, to be torn to pieces, with no one to rescue me....” (PS 7:2-3)

## OVERVIEW:

Yesterday we talked about persecution. We had to answer a question of how we respond when people challenge us. We continue with this theme in our readings at this point in Lent.

So today, I am asking you to keep pushing forward despite any judgment or questioning of your personal restoration. You are growing, you are changing, and while it may not be persecution, there just may be an internal struggle with things that you once thought were okay or behaviors you no longer want as part of your life.

Now is your time to prove how much you truly want to be transformed through Jesus. You can't stop moving forward. Let the true, good, and beautiful be your guide. Seek what is righteous, not what is easy. In the end, the fullness of life will bring you a peace that nothing on this Earth does. Allow what you see as your end goal to make you strong enough to push past anyone or anything that tries to slow you down.

## ACTION:

Write down changes with thoughts, emotions, or actions you have seen since Lent started. Notice how God is working in your life and make an even more determined effort to focus on the areas you still want to work on.

## REFERENCE:

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.”

*(Dale Carnegie)*

day 33 – “New Beginnings” (fifth sunday of lent)

## READINGS:

IS 43:16-21 | PSALM 126 | PHIL 3:8-14 | JN 8:1-11

## REFLECTION QUOTE:

“Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus.” (PHIL 3:13-14)



## OVERVIEW:

"Regrets, I've had a few, but too few to mention" are the famous words Frank Sinatra sang in, "My Way." In my life, I've had more than a few regrets, but I can't look back at who I once was... I need to look ahead as to who I strive to be.

Once we hand ourselves over to Him, Christ sees us as a new creation who decided they wanted a new beginning... A life offered to Him as their Savior. You must leave behind all the baggage you placed at His feet earlier in Lent. After all, your brokenness is on the mend. You wouldn't continue to wear a cast after your broken bone has been healed. Even if there is lots of stuff in your past, put away what once was and see hope in the new beginning.

Life will try to remind you time and time again why the old you still exists... and it is part of your story so they are still there. It just shouldn't consume you. There is a new you, who sees hope in the new choices you have made to see God in a new way. You were never truly broken, just unfinished.

## ACTION:

Time to dream again. Journal about what the future looks like and how your relationship with Christ will lead you wherever life is taking you next.

## REFERENCE:

"Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead."

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church # 357)*

day 34 - "Truth"

## READINGS:

DN 13:1-9,15-17, 19-30,33-62 | PSALM 23 | JN 8:12-20

## REFLECTION QUOTE:

"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"  
(Sworn Testimony Oath)

## OVERVIEW:



When your sworn in during testimony not only do they ask you to tell the truth, they want the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They say the word truth three times to make sure you really get the point.

Truth is hard because it is not popular. We don't want to hurt a friend's feelings, or we feel someone's choices aren't really our business, or we even keep quiet when gossip runs rampant because we don't want to turn attention to ourselves.

We live in a world right now where everything is a distorted image of the truth. It changes depending on what news source you use or whoever is screaming the loudest. This must end. We are called to share what is actual truth and share what we hear on God almighty's authority. Stand firm in your core beliefs and the truth found in the Word and church teaching. Make sure you tell the truth and nothing BUT the truth with conviction AND compassion. While it may not always be well received by others, it is the whole truth and what God wants us to give as testimony. In the end... who will be the one to judge us for eternity?

### **ACTION:**

What lies, judgement, or change of culture have you allowed to occur around you? Search for ways to help guide others to the truth, even if they don't understand at first.

### **REFERENCE:**

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal.' Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own "always, to the close of the age"

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church #80)*

day 35 – "Put it in Reverse"

### **READINGS:**

NM 21:4-9 | PSALM 102 | JN 8:21 – 30

### **REFLECTION QUOTE:**

"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me." (JN 8:28)

### **OVERVIEW:**



Why did I have to lose my job? Why did my loved one have to suffer? Why won't God answer my prayer? These are questions we can find ourselves asking in any moment. There is no explanation during the moment of pain, but there can be revelation if we allow God to be God and then we see things in reverse through the lens of faith.

Both of our readings today have a sign lifted up before the people. One is the golden serpents on the staff for the Israelites who turned their back on God, and the other is the Son of Man on the cross before all people. These are reminders of what God does to heal us if we really believe in Him.

Jesus had to die, so we could be redeemed from our sins... there was no other way and all other attempts by God the Father failed. We can see that now, but in the instant, every one of His followers must have felt their world was over. It's the same with us. When we are left asking questions or we are searching for things outside of the will of God, we can be lost. If a situation or someone we love has been used as part of God's plan, then the only way we can truly honor the sacrifice is to let it change who we are and where we turn for all things. Look at the big picture in reverse for God's ultimate meaning.

## ACTION:

Pray for an understanding of every rough situation or loss of a loved one that has hurt your heart. Ask the Father to reveal its purpose to you and move forward trusting in Him.

## REFERENCE:

"I have learned that faith means trusting in advance what will only make sense in reverse."

*(Philip Yancey)*

day 36 - "Take Me O'Lord "

## READINGS:

DN 3:14-20,91-92, 95 | DN 3 | JN 8:31 – 42

## REFLECTION QUOTE:

"If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (JN 8:31-32)

## OVERVIEW:

You've heard my take for 35 days. Today I want you to be still and offer your voice through the words of the prayer of St. Ignatius.

*Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given it all to me. To You, O Lord, I return it. All is Yours, dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is sufficient for me.*



## ACTION:

Pray these words to offer yourself to truly be God's disciples set free by the truth in all things.

## REFERENCE:

"...We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father. "

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church #2835)*

day 37 - "Covenant"

## READINGS:

GN 17:3-9 | PSALM 105 | JN 8:51 – 59

## REFLECTION QUOTE:

"The Lord remembers His covenant forever." (PS 105:8)

## OVERVIEW:

We have learned that there is a difference between a promise and a covenant. A covenant isn't just a verbal agreement, but there is an exchange of goods. Each party is giving something of themselves so the bond cannot be broken. God makes a covenant with His people... it goes far beyond the promise.

With what we are just reminded of, if we are part of that covenant, it means we have to offer something of ourselves to the relationship as a sign of our commitment. The Sacraments of the Catholic Church are so powerful. We come forth to enter into an agreement with our Lord so nothing in this world can separate us from Him. The problem is we may not think about the need to offer ourselves and we can often expect God to do all the work through His grace.

Give all of yourself to God. Think about how your participation in the faith puts a responsibility on you. This is not a one-way street or an attempt to try... The covenant says your will.

## ACTION:

When you are witness to a Sacrament or partake in a Sacrament like the Eucharist, think about how it is an act of love that both you and God are sharing in to reaffirm your covenant.





## REFERENCE:

"COVENANT - (T)hey pledge themselves in loyalty to one another. It differs from the modern concept of contract in that there is not only an obligation to carry out some specific commitment externally, but a pledge of loyalty or community of soul."

*(Hastings Bible Dictionary)*

day 38 - "Distress Signal"

## READINGS:

JER 20:10-13 | PSALM 18 | JN 10:31 – 42

## REFLECTION QUOTE:

"The Lord is with me, like a mighty champion: my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph." (JER 8:11)

## OVERVIEW:

Do you ever feel like telling God, "This is not what I signed up for!?" I do lots of times... and little secret, there are times I actually tell Him that. I call them my Jeremiah moments.

In today's reading, we hear Jeremiah telling God of all the awful things that are happening to him since he started proclaiming what the Lord has given him as a message. As with all scripture though, we should do a little study for ourselves and go back to read the whole passage. Chapter 20 of the book of Jeremiah starts with, "You duped me O' Lord and I let myself be duped." Basically, accusing God of not telling him what being a prophet would really mean when He went along with God's plan.

There is good news in all this though. He only gets 10 lines in before he says, "But the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion..." (Jer 20:11). Jeremiah was willing to see the whole picture. He sent his distress signal to God getting out what he needed to in his feelings through words but then proclaims his faithfulness despite the struggle. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Don't let a few weak moments dampen the beauty of who God created you to be... blow off a little steam and remain faithful.

## ACTION:

Pray to the Holy Spirit for the gift of understanding to help you share yourself with the world even when you don't seem to be getting anywhere.

## REFERENCE:

"Don't worry. God is never blind to your tears, never deaf to your prayers, and never silent to your pain. He sees, He hears, and He will deliver you."

*(Unknown)*



## day 39 – “Recognizing God”

### READINGS:

EZ 37:21-28 | JER 31 | JN 11:45 – 56

### REFLECTION QUOTE:

“This man is performing many signs. If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation.” (JN 11:47-48)

### OVERVIEW:

If Jesus was before you in this moment, would you recognize Him if he didn’t come in the appearance that our pictures depict Him. Even in my life, I work SO HARD to find God and to see Him that I get to the end of the day and realized how many times I missed Him when He was present.

The Pharisees missed everything that Jesus was doing in the world because their pride got the best of them. What else could He have shown them? They were never going to be happy because it was all about what they thought they wanted instead of being focused on God before them.

Maybe today He will be in the child’s eyes that look at you with every ounce of love they have; possibly it is in the elderly person crossing the parking lot in the grocery store who tests your patience; it could even be the police officer who writes you a ticket for speeding because God needed to protect you from the harm that would have occurred had you continued on your way. His signs are everywhere, we just need to choose to see Him.

### ACTION:

Start your day by asking God to give you eyes to see Him at work in your life. At the end of the day, reflect on when you didn’t notice He was there, then take refuge in His faithfulness to be with you till the end of time.

### REFERENCE:

"The whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: his silences, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love for people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and his Resurrection are the actualization of his word and the fulfillment of Revelation."

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church #561 – John Paul II)*