

MARCH 18, 2018



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



JEREMIAH 31:31-34

PSALM 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15

HEBREWS 5:7-9

JOHN 12:28-33

REFLECTION

In John's account of the Gospel, Jesus tells some of his Apostles that he is troubled. This may be surprising to us—Jesus, troubled?! Yes, Jesus struggled with the path that God set before him. Though he knew his ultimate purpose, he longed to avoid suffering in a very real, raw, and human way. The reading from Hebrews describes some of this suffering for us. Jesus could have called on God to save him from torture and death, yet he chose to suffer painfully for our salvation. Jesus' relationship with God was not without strain and conflict. However, this Gospel reading from John gives us insight into how Jesus copes with struggles of faith; in a moment of weakness, he glorifies God's name, setting an example for us. When conflicts arise, he turns to God.

ACTION

St. Teresa of Avila has a wonderful quote which is directed toward God: "If this is the way you treat your friends, it's no wonder you have so few." The first time that I heard this, I cracked up laughing. It spoke so much to how I was feeling in my relationship with God. Sometimes we feel that God is not treating us very well. In the field of psychology, there is a process to recovering or mending a relationship. It begins first with honesty and recognition and then grows to acceptance. This week, let's apply a similar process to our relationship with God. First of all, honestly address any unspoken (or un-prayed about) emotions. Recognize how you are feeling in your relationship with God. How have you taken Lent as an opportunity to grow closer to God? Next, place yourself vulnerably in God's hands. I like to picture myself literally sitting in the palm of God's hands. Have a conversation with God; talk to God about your day, week, month, year, or any time that comes to mind. Speak or write honestly, but let it be a conversation—take time to listen, and leave space for an answer. In this honesty you can come to recognize a new relationship with God. You can come to acceptance. Try to use this type of prayer often this week, and remember: Jesus was troubled. He didn't always get along with God. But when he struggled, he called out to God for help, and we can, too.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- Can you recall a time when you were particularly upset with God? How did this impact your relationships with others?
- How is your Lent progressing, especially in terms of your relationship with God?