

3rd Tuesday of the Season of Lent Wisdom from Saint Patrick
Fr. Frank Schuster
March 17, 2020

Good morning to you. As always, the readings for the day can be found at www.usccb.org if you don't have a daily missal handy. You can always press pause and play when you are ready. And thank you for tuning in!

Today is the feast of St. Patrick, a saint who needs no introduction. Today would have been a feast day for a number of us if it were any other year. Instead, due to social distancing, every Irish restaurant will probably be empty today. You know, St. Patrick was famous for chasing the snakes out of Ireland. Perhaps today we can ask for his intercession to chase the coronavirus away from our world. I was delighted that the office of readings today gives us an excerpt from Saint Patrick's confession. It begins, "I give unceasing thanks to my God, who kept me faithful in the day of my testing. Today I can offer him sacrifice with confidence, giving myself as a living victim to Christ, my Lord, who kept me safe through all my trials." I couldn't help but think of this as good advice for all of us living in these times.

And it is amazing how, during times like these, we can read the scriptures in a new way too. I couldn't help but be struck by the words in our first reading from Azariah in the Book of Daniel, "For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins. We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you. But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received..." Isn't that both beautiful and appropriate these times?

I was also struck by the parable today in our Gospel reading of a king settling debts. The wicked servant asks the king for mercy but then offers no mercy to those who are in debt to him. On the one hand, it made me kind of wonder: how far will government bailouts of companies at the end of all this will actually make it employees? It always seems to be the person at the bottom of the corporate ladder who gets to carry the most weight during these times. But it also made me wonder, how often does the love, mercy and compassion we expect from others translate to the love, mercy and compassion we share with others?

And so I think the Lord's advice to forgive like we would like to be forgiven is a good idea these days. To love others the way we would like to be loved is probably the best medicine right now. This is how we honor God in these days. He doesn't need any other sacrifice than our humble and contrite heart. Once we allow ourselves to be more humble and contrite, how much easier it is then to forgive others seventy times seven? How much more easier it is to love others like we want to be loved? How much easier would it be to pray like St. Patrick, "I give unceasing thanks to my God, who kept me faithful in the day of my testing. Today I can offer him sacrifice with confidence, giving myself as a living victim to Christ, my Lord, who kept me safe through all my trials." Wise words from a wonderful saint. God bless you and peace be with you this day!