

A Reflection from Fr. Canisius for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Dear Parishioners,

In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant the Lord will establish with his people. And why was the Lord establishing a new covenant, we might ask: What happened to the old one? As Jeremiah describes and as we see throughout the Old Testament, the recurring problem was disobedience. The Israelites failed, time and again, to obey the Lord's commandments: rebelling against the Lord, choosing instead to follow the ways of their neighbors, or to live as they chose.

So, the Lord God established a new covenant, one that was established in the blood of Christ, through his sacrifice on the cross. As we hear Jesus say in today's Gospel, this is why he came into the world. *Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.* Here he is foretelling not just his death, but the kind of death he would undergo. His mission is not just one of suffering, however, but that he might be raised into new life, and through him, through his resurrection, all might be offered salvation, eternal life.

The path Jesus followed that led to his passion, death, and resurrection was born in obedience to the Father. Jesus' words: *Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?* call to mind his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, *not what I will but what you will* (Mk 14:36b). His words epitomize that obedience, that willingness to do the Father's will even when it is hard, even when it involves great suffering. It is this obedience that the author of Hebrews highlights as the key to Jesus' sacrifice and the imitation of this obedience, the key to our salvation.

God's good works are all around us; we need only open our eyes to see and our hearts to believe. In this season of repentance, may we remember that resurrection is coming. May we sing praise to God, who has already won the victory for us! Christ nourishes us with his own body and blood, with his very self, that we might grow in his likeness, grow in obedience to God, and remain with him forever.

Our Lenten Pastorate Penance service takes place this Wednesday, March 20 at 7:00 PM in the church at St. Gabriel. If you have been reluctant to come to the sacrament, have been away for some time, or just find it difficult to get to a Saturday afternoon confession time, this is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with Christ and his Church.

Have a blessed week!

~ *Fr. Canisius*