

## Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Apr 9th 2014

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Although most of us would be challenged to spell their names, they just seem to roll off the tongue. Their names were imbedded in our minds as children and their story was the basis for gospel songs; and, even Louie Armstrong sang about the unwavering faith these threemen had in God in the 1951 movie called *The Strip*. Even now it is so easy to close your eyes and conjure up images of their confrontation with King Nebuchadnezzar, his utter rage at their refusal to bow down to him, being cast into the white hot furnace and then standing in the flames with God at their side.

But when we think about our own lives can we conjure up images and memories of when we acted like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? When we demonstrated our undying faith in Jesus and stood firm when challenged to do what is right and just in the eyes of God? For most of us I am sure we might be able to think of one or two such events; although probably not as dramatic as today's reading. But why not more? Are we not as willing to put our faith in God first as these three servants were willing to do? Do we question whether or not Jesus is always there with us and at our side in good times and in bad ready to come to our aid?

As we near the end of our Lenten journey let us strive to create more personal memories as vivid and as lasting as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego standing in the white hot furnace. But let's not forget that these vivid memories of us standing firm when challenged to do what is right and just in the eyes of God can just as easily be memories of us living our faith. Do you recall the last time that you gave aid and comfort to those less fortunate; that you helped the homeless and poor; or, that you visited the infirmed or the lonely? To God these actions are just as important as the refusal by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar.

The next time you put your faith in action take a picture in your mind's eye of the good you provided by living your faith in service to others. Hopefully these memories will be as vivid and as lasting as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego standing in the white hot furnace and serve as a constant reminder that by living our faith daily we too, when challenged to take the easy way out, can stand firm in our beliefs and demonstrate our faith and love of Jesus through our service to others.

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