

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Feb 7th 2015

Memorial of Saint Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

As we read today's reading, we are about halfway through this portion of Ordinary Time – counting the weeks between Christmas season and the start of Lent. Our readings are encouraging us to reflect between these important liturgical seasons with important stories from both the Old and New Testament.

Our first reading tells of King David – considered one of the greatest kings in the bible. King David is so interesting and one that we can easily relate to since he is so much like us. He loves God yet still messes up. Clearly, he is a man who truly loves God and is God-filled, his psalms are beautiful tributes to God and evidence of his deep, abiding love. Yet, he makes some seriously poor decisions. The best part for him (and us) is that he is forgiven. His trust in the Lord is rewarded and his shortcomings forgiven. David is a role model for us in many ways – his trust, his faith, his singing God's praise. While we do not need to emulate his sins, we, no doubt, will have our own shortcomings. If we sincerely ask for God's forgiveness as David did and continue to trust and praise God, we, too, will be forgiven.

The responsorial psalm is a song of praise. The response of "Blessed be God my salvation!" sums it all up nicely. The promise is clear: "he is a shield to all who take refuge in him." As David, we trust and sing praises (showing our gratitude for our loving God and our gifted lives) – we believe in God as our Rock and we are saved!!

The Gospel tells the story of John the Baptist and his demise under the hands of King Herod. John in his forthrightness confronts King Herod about his marriage to his sister-in-law. While Herod jails John, he is hesitate to kill him recognizing John as a man of God and someone "interesting to listen to." It is through hate, jealousy, pride, and lust that the Evil one is able to influence Herod into beheading John. It would appear that Herod would have been content with John staying behind bars and quieted from condemning his marriage. Yet the conniving of wife and daughter backed him into a place where because of pride and saving face, he had to kill John. I wonder how many times we allow ourselves or, at least, find ourselves backed into a corner where we make choices that would not otherwise be made.

We allows ourselves to forget what we know to be right and, instead, choose based on our image or what others may think. We are influenced by forces external to our true being, we allow vanity and pride to become our touchstone. It is then that we are most in need of God's grace and we need to cry out for it to support us in making the right decisions.

Oh, God, be with me today as I trudge along being bombarded by forces of greed and pride, help me to stay the path and keep your Light as my target and goal. Give me strength to make the right decisions no matter how hard they are today – You are always with me!!

Nancy Shirley-Creighton University College of Nursing