

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Mar 13th 2017

The Lenten season was so-named because the days become longer in part of the world at this time; spring arrives. The days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday encompass a time in which the “ashes” of last year’s vegetation gradually are pushed aside by rain and new growth. It symbolically is a great time to dwell on the fact that God allows us to rise from the ashes and destruction of sin, and to move closer to fulfilling our part of the covenant with Him. We begin our Lenten journey marked by ashes and “shamefaced”, as Daniel writes, because “we have sinned, been wicked, and done evil.” We are made aware that God loves us despite our disobedience and rebelliousness. We are only asked to love God and to keep His commandments. During the course of the Lenten season, we need to dwell not only on our propensity to drift away from the love of God and His commandments, but also on his love and forgiveness, and our salvation through Him. We pray with the Psalmist, “deliver us and pardon our sins for your name’s sake.”

The gospel today is given by Jesus in “a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing.” The message, indeed, is concise, condensed, and immensely rewarding. If we consider our interactions with others in our troubled world, we have to ask ourselves, are we still the disobedient and rebellious sinners that Daniel writes about in our first reading? Are we following Jesus’ admonition to stop judging; to stop condemning; and to forgive others? It seems that too often we have not brought this message into our hearts. We need to pray that we become more welcoming to the oppressed and the needy. We need to open our hearts and arms to those who lately have been cast adrift to seek refuge; to have mercy; to forgive; and not to judge. “The measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

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