

## Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Mar 13th 2013

Today's readings are full of:

hope... for the Lord comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted...

provision... he leads them and guides them beside springs of water...

care and sustenance....can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?...

promise...even should she forget, I will never forget you...

judgment...those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation...

and images of a father who is a protective provider, both wise and just, and of an attentive and tender mother.

As I prayed with these readings, I found myself also praying for students that I encounter in my ministry, especially those who describe themselves as "atheist" or "agnostic". Although many students name the religious faith of their upbringing when asked to fill in the blank on a questionnaire, there are many among them who are full of skepticism or even hostility towards organized religion. I can understand this. They were still children, or just coming into their teens on 9/11 and have grown up with terrorism and fear of terrorism. They have seen widespread scandalous behavior of those claiming to be religious. Some had parents who passed on belief and rule without an experience of the living God. After thousands of years, they see a world that is still full of poverty, famine, war, violence, a lack of health care. Where is this God of promise and comfort? Why do so many suffer at the hands of others? I can understand that their growing inquisitive and rational minds reject the images and promises of today's readings in their honest search for meaning and truth.

Our Lenten journey is a time to remember the "desert" times of our lives – the times when we suffered, nothing made sense, and God seemed distant and uncaring. Who were the people that helped you find sustenance? What circumstances forced you to dig deeply into the well of your experience to find the refreshing spring waters of life? When did you start noticing the green shoots of hope in the small deeds of love and care of those around you?

During this Lenten journey, God, help me understand each situation and event of my life from your

vantage point; Jesus, help me see you in each person, and Blessed Holy Spirit, may I recognize you in each breath I take, and trust that you are as present and active in our world as ever before, and as you ever will be.

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