

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Mar 16th 2013**

As I write this reflection, it is the first week of Lent. At Mass this morning, I found myself frustrated with my wimpy start to the Lenten season. Each year I have such wonderful intentions of utilizing this time of preparation to increase my awareness of and gratitude for God's loving presence and the selfless actions of his son on behalf of us all. These are the most remarkable gifts. They are true gifts. Nothing we have done, or ever will do, will be enough to earn them. Yet they are gifts freely offered to each of us. I find myself wondering why it is so difficult to acknowledge the primacy of these gifts.

Like the distrusting members of the crowd in the gospel reading for today, I spend much of my time ignoring the presence of "the Christ." The rationalization for the crowd's mistrust of Jesus was his humble origin in Galilee rather than Bethlehem. My rationalization is often in the form of being too busy with things that really do not matter. As much as I do not want to compare myself with them, my overinflated sense of self-importance is much like that of the Pharisees.

Some in the crowd recognized Jesus as "the Christ." Even the guards, when questioned by the Pharisees and the authorities about not arresting Jesus, replied, "Never before has anyone spoken like this man." My prayer at this time in the first week of Lent is that by the fourth week of Lent when this is to be read, I will be more like those who recognize the Christ; and I will have grown in my awareness of and gratitude for God's loving presence and the selfless actions of his son. May I allow myself the many opportunities and the privilege to savor and be grateful for God's gifts of his loving presence and redemption by his Son not just in this Season of Lent, but throughout my life.

Susan Tinley