

Whispers of the Spirit



Meditations for January 17th to January 23rd

Whispers of the Spirit is a shared ministry of
Deacon Carolyn Quinnell and Ruth Wallace.
This week's meditations are written by Deacon Carolyn.

Sunday, January 17th 1 Samuel 3:1-20 / Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17 /
1 Corinthians 6:12-20 / John 1:43-51

John 1:46 *Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."*

Who knows how rivalries begin, but apparently there was one between Nathanael's home town and Nazareth. Fortunately for Nathanael, his brother Philip was able to rise above the preconceived notion of people from "that place," to see and listen to this person called Jesus. "Come and see," he told his brother. Such simple words, but how often do we say them? While we're eager to tell others about a great movie, how often do we say that about our parish? I know for some it's a very natural thing to say – then there's the rest of us who are more reluctant. Perhaps if we speak to God first about overcoming our own prejudices ...

Father, thank you for the one who first said to me, "Come and see." Amen.

Monday, January 18th Acts 4:8-13 / Psalm 23 / 1 Peter 5:1-4 /
Matthew 16:13-19 (The Confession of Peter)

Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.*

Again with the prejudices. Yesterday we read about Nathanael being prejudiced against anyone from Nazareth. Today the rulers, elders, scribes, the high priest Caiaphas along with his family are gathered together to hear the testimony of Peter and John about a healing that had taken place. Our verse says they were amazed when they realized Peter and John were uneducated and ordinary men.

Nothing could have been further from the truth! These two men had spent approximately three years with Jesus himself and had the very best education they could possibly ever have received. That, in itself, made them anything but ordinary. Maybe, just maybe, they should have looked at what came from the hearts of Peter and John, rather than what was printed on any credentials they may (or may not) carry. Who in your life speaks in such a manner that you know Jesus is in their heart?

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Amen.

Tuesday, January 19th Isaiah 44:9-20 / Psalm 26, 28 /
Ephesians 4:17-32 / Mark 3:19b-35

Ephesians 4:26-27 *Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.*

This is one of those handy dandy tips for having a good relationship with your spouse. What is it about going to sleep while you're still angry? I don't know about you, but if I try to go to sleep while I'm angry, I'm usually not very successful in actually sleeping. If I don't get enough sleep at night, guess what, I wake up grumpy and the anger becomes a self-perpetuating cycle. One question I try to remember to ask myself is this, "Does this thing I'm upset over have any eternal significance?" I've found that there are many things that, when I ask that question, the answer is "no." It helps me to be more forgiving. It might help you as well.

Father, forgive us our sins and help us forgive those who sin against us. Amen.

Wednesday, January 20th Isaiah 44:24 - 45:7 / Psalm 38 /
Ephesians 5:1-14 / Mark 4:1-20

Psalm 38:17 *Truly, I am on the verge of falling, * and my pain is always with me.*

We have had, and still have, people within our parish family who could relate to this verse. There was one lady who took hours to get

ready to attend church on Sunday morning, yet she was a faithful attendee. There was another who had osteoporosis so bad that she repeatedly got hairline fractures in her spine, yet she too was in church every Sunday and Wednesday. We currently have those who are in constant pain and have a hard time moving from one place to another with or without either cane or walker. Yet, in every case, these individuals are true believers in the loving grace of Jesus. What can those of us who can maneuver fairly well learn from them? Let's pray about it.

Lord, you are our strength and salvation. Give us grace to do those things you would have us do. Amen.

Thursday, January 21st Isaiah 45:5-17 / Psalm 37:1-18 / Ephesians 5:15-33 / Mark 4:21-34

Mark 4:21 *He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand?"*

It seems rather logical, doesn't it? Why light a lamp if you're only going to cover it up? If you cover it up, it cannot do what it was intended to do in the first place. Now consider this, if Jesus is known as the Light of the World, and upon our baptism and acceptance of Him as our savior, we are then reflections of His light - why would we do anything to block that reflection from doing what it was intended to do? Let's take this a bit further: if we focus our attention on worldly matters (really easy to do right now) and not Jesus, how can we reflect his light to the world? Where is your attention today?

Jesus, help me keep my focus on you. Amen.

Friday, January 22nd Isaiah 45:18-25 / Psalm 31 / Ephesians 6:1-9 / Mark 4:35-41

Isaiah 45:18 *For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other.*

Considering the size of the earth, each human is but a tiny speck upon its surface. Given that our perspective is so small it is hard to visualize the interrelatedness of all creation. I watched a program one time that talked about how the rainforests in South America benefited from the dust clouds that formed in the Sahara Desert and were blown across the Atlantic. Likewise, thermal vents in the Antarctic feed plankton, which is carried north by currents where krill feed, which in turn are eaten by whales. There is an order to God's creation. When I consider this and the vastness of this planet we call home, all I can say is WOW!

Thank you, God, for all of creation. Amen.

Saturday, January 23rd Isaiah 46:1-13 / Psalm 30, 32 /
Ephesians 6:10-24 / Mark 5:1-20

Ephesians 6:10-11 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Soldiers wearing armor would have been a familiar sight in the time of Paul's writing. And of course, soldiers wear their armor as protection from swords, spears and the like. While we may not be regularly attacked by people trying to pierce us with swords or spears (thank you God!), we are subject to attack from the evil one - the devil. In his book, "The Screwtape Letters," C.S. Lewis reminds us of two opposite errors on the part of humans that are equally beneficial to the devil's cause: the first is to completely ignore his existence, and the other is to be overly concerned about him. A priest friend told me once that while the devil does exist, it's best to not look for him behind every bush. So how does the devil attack us? Well, he reminds us of our past failures, telling us we're not good. He tempts us to lie or gossip. He tempts us to do things like steal or not love our neighbors. Remember, Christ died for our sins. We have been forgiven. We are to keep our focus on Jesus. He will give us strength.

Help me, Jesus. Amen.

