

**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

**Collect of the Day**

O God, with you is the well of life, and in your light we see light: Quench our thirst with living water, and flood our darkened minds with heavenly light; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Lessons**

Psalm 46:1-8

Psalm 46:1-8 (NRSV)

- 1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 5 God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
- 6 The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah
- 8 Come, behold the works of the LORD; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NRSV)

1 Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. 2 Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side. 3 Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. 4 Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen this?" Then he led me back along the bank of the river. 7 As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. 9 Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. 12 On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves

will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

### John 5:1-18

1 After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. 3 In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" 7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." 9 At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath. 10 So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." 11 But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" 12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take it up and walk'?" 13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. 14 Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you." 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. 16 Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." 18 For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

### Reflection

Two of the images that John loves to use in his Gospel are water and wine. The sacramental association of the Christian community with baptism and Holy Eucharist cannot be missed. As our prayer book reminds us, the sacraments are outward and visible signs of God's inward and spiritual grace. The healing stories and miracles of Jesus are signs pointing to that greater, deeper understanding of who Jesus is as our Lord and Savior. With the healing of the man at the pool, the obvious presence of water as healing reminds us what we seek as a people made whole in baptism as members of the body of Christ. But John's subtleness of having Jesus tell the man to stand and walk without getting into the water reminds us that it is not the water that heals. It is Jesus who heals. The water is the pointer towards healing, and Jesus is that inward healing grace towards which the water points.

Lent reminds us as a people of sacraments to always remember that it is not about wine or water, but rather what wine and water point to. We do not have to worry about what divine mystery is happening in the sacraments. Rather, we are supposed to be a people who are changed by the spiritual grace of God which Jesus invites the man at the pool to enjoy.

I find that the prayer of St. Francis gives good guidance to this when we are reminded to be instruments of God's grace - seeking to console rather than be consoled, etc. To be people

looking out at ways to serve the world rather than trying to get what we can for ourselves. Our pointers of worship are always pointing. We need to look.