

[31]

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

B

FIRST READING

The days are coming when I will make a new covenant with Israel
and I will forgive their iniquity.

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah

31:31-34

The Lord says,

“The time is coming when I will make a new agreement
with the people of Israel and Judah.

It will be different from the agreement
that I made with their ancestors,
when I led them out of Egypt.

Although I was their God, they broke their agreement with me.”

“This is the agreement that I, the Lord,
will make with the people of Israel:
I will write my laws on their hearts and minds.
I will be their God, and they will be my people.

“No longer will they have to teach each other to obey me.
I, the Lord, promise that all of them will obey me,
no matter who they are.
I will forgive their sins and forget the evil things they have done.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

51:1, 10, 12

R. (12a) Create a clean heart in me, O God.

You are kind, God!
Please have pity on me.
You are always merciful!
Please wipe away my sins.

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

Create pure thoughts in me
and make me faithful again.

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

Make me as happy as you did
when you saved me;
make me want to obey!

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

John 12:26

R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

If you serve me, follow me, says the Lord;
and where I am, my servant will also be.

R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies,
it yields a rich harvest.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John

12:24-26

Jesus said to his disciples:

“I tell you for certain that a grain of wheat that falls on the ground
will never be more than one grain unless it dies.

But if it dies, it will produce lots of wheat.

“If you love your life, you will lose it.

If you give it up in this world,
you will be given eternal life.

“If you serve me, you must go with me.

My servants will be with me wherever I am.

If you serve me, my Father will honor you.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Fifth Sunday of Lent — Cycle B

Prayer: God of our hearts, each day of this Lenten time, we are trying to grow in love and forgiveness. We believe your Spirit is working within us to help us. Thank you for your love and forgiveness to each of us. AMEN.

READINGS: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ps 51:3-4, 12-15; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33

Reflection and Discussion

I. Even God can improve on an idea! We have heard about COVENANTS as promises God makes with the Chosen People and even with individuals. The reading from Jeremiah, a great prophet, tells us that a covenant made on stones, or for us written on 'official paper,' isn't as good as one written in our hearts. So, God has a better idea: God is going to write the LAW, not on stones like with Moses, but on HEARTS.

God's laws only make real sense when we understand them in our HEARTS. LOVE is the LAW God writes on our hearts—just like God wrote on the hearts of the people of the House of Israel. Just like the LAW Jesus came to fulfill. "God so loved the world...." Jesus came to reveal the love, the heart of God, which is LOVE.

When we really know someone, or someone really knows us, we say: "I know you by heart." Well, God knows us by heart!!

Jesus is the only person that totally, totally, loved God from his heart. That's one reason we, as Catholic Christians, honor the Sacred Heart and the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Blood is the source of life. Blood is what is contained in the heart and gives a person life. Well, the LAW OF LOVE written on our hearts by God, gives us life. Jesus' love, poured out in love for all of Creation, gave us a share in the life of God.

We say to each other: "What's in your heart?" When people who love each other, hurt each other, they sometimes say: "You broke my heart." Or, "I have a sad heart." Lent, love, forgiveness are for our hearts! To help us, totally, totally...Love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

II. In the Gospel by John, today, Jesus tells the disciples, he knows the day, the hour, is coming for him to be lifted up. We know, that means, when Jesus is lifted up on the Cross. From the Cross, Jesus offered his Body and his Blood as a great sign of the love In his heart!

At Mass, when we watch the BREAD/HOST being lifted up, we believe, with all our heart, it is the Body of Jesus. When we watch the WINE/CHALICE being lifted up, we believe, with all our heart, it is the Blood of Jesus. In our hearts, we know God has the power to change ordinary bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus. In our hearts, we believe. Each time, hopefully, we renew, in our hearts, our love for Jesus.

(continued on p. 2)

Activities: This week, we can open our folded Sunday Lenten booklet: Open it to its full 8-1/2 by 11 size. The top left side (1/4 of the page) will be used today. The top right side (1/4 of the page), can be used next Sunday. The bottom 1/2 of the page can be used for Holy Week.

Make a HEART. Write the word, LOVE or draw little pictures that show how we love or experience love: A mom and dad; brothers, sisters, grandparents and friends; pets, nature.

Or show a picture of the HOST and CHALICE.

Explain: Gestures made by the priest during Mass, are prayers—just like words. Recall our use of ASHES: When we blessed each other with ashes, it was a prayer. When we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, it is a prayer. When we genuflect, knee, stand—it is a prayer. When the priest, holds the Scripture book, the host or the Chalice, high for all to see, these are prayer gestures. Since we don't each have a host and a chalice, the priest holds them up for all to ADORE.

In our hearts, we say a prayer: Jesus, I believe with all my heart, you are in the bread; Jesus, I believe with all my heart, you are in the wine.

To conclude the session: Remind the group, to WATCH and PRAY in their hearts when the Host and Chalice is "Lifted Up".

Encourage everyone to watch, pray and adore, the BODY and BLOOD of Jesus at Mass.

Then, have the leader, say each phrase below, then, together, everyone repeats.

Dear Jesus,/ I believe in YOU./ Jesus, I believe You are in the BREAD./
Jesus, I believe You are in the WINE. / Jesus, I believe You are in my HEART./
Jesus, I believe You are in everyone's' heart./ Help all of us live with love in our hearts./
AMEN.