

Connect!

Uniting Word & World



Sunday, February 8, 2015

Prophetic Voices

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/020815.cfm>

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Mark 1:29-39



Many Americans lived this past week without seeing or thinking about the seventieth anniversary of the [liberation of prisoners in the Auschwitz concentration camp at the end of World War II](#). CNN offered full coverage of the [commemoration](#). Multinational leaders were present, as were religious leaders from various denominations. Most moving was the praying of Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead. Cameras focused on individuals in the audience wearing the striped fabric of the camps. They mouthed the words being prayed and sung. Tears streamed down their faces.

Other concentration camps were also liberated on different dates and by different groups in the Allies. [Dachau was one of them](#), liberated by the American army on April 29, 1945. Dachau was the designated camp for political prisoners. Over two thousand of these were bishops, priests, deacons, ministers, and religious women. Their stories are coming to light as individuals and even groups are being canonized. The feast of bishop and martyr [Blessed Michael Kozal](#) was just celebrated on January 26.

This week commemorates those who live the consecrated life, men and women who have dedicated themselves “to follow the Lord in a special way.” Pope Francis adds to that, “They are men and women who can awaken the world.” That is exactly what these modern-day martyrs did. They were imprisoned because they opposed the power of evil invading their world. They were the prophetic voice of Christianity, calling for justice, calling for freedom from domination, calling for peace.

These prophetic voices urged healing of the ghastly wounds being inflicted on the undesirables of Nazi society, the handicapped, gypsies, and especially the Jews.

Isn't this the message given by Jesus himself as he healed those suffering from physical afflictions? He also confronted evil in those chained by powerful forces that spoke out half-truths about him and his mission. Those forces of evil were constantly present during his pilgrimage of salvation. At Calvary, all external appearances added up to the victory of evil. In the concentration camps, to all external appearances, evil also won.

But darkness was penetrated by the Resurrection, the resurgence of life, both in Jesus and in the victory of World War II. We *can* believe! We *can* trust! Darkness will never prevail!

Today ISIS threatens us. Today what Pope Francis calls "the theology of prosperity" threatens us. Our political world looks dark. But just as throughout human history God raised up prophetic voices spearheading light into our world, today God continues. That's in God's very nature, a nature of life and light, a nature of love and peace.

Not only do we celebrate consecrated life this week, we also celebrate married life. These two paths of living don't oppose each other, but complement one another. As Jesus went to a quiet place to listen to God, so both religious and married spend time with God and go forth as Jesus did. They go to other villages, to places outside their homes, in order to spread the good news and bring healing. Pope Francis calls for a revolution of tenderness. His prophetic voice calls all, including the consecrated and married, to live lives of tenderness. What is tenderness? It is the touch of loving hands and hearts. Tenderness can and must be nurtured both among the consecrated and in families. This was the way of Jesus. He not only healed, but, tenderly, reached out and took the sick by the hand and lifted them up. So must we.

If we can only incorporate today's example of Jesus into our lives, if only we can...then we will be living examples of St. Paul's dictum, "become all things to all"! We will be the prophetic voices of today.

Patricia DeGroot, ObISB

PRAYER

God our Father,
we thank you for calling men and women
to serve in your Son's Kingdom
as sisters, brothers, religious priests,
consecrated virgins, and hermits,
as well as members of Secular Institutes.
Renew their knowledge and love of you,
and send your Holy Spirit to help them
respond generously and courageously to your will.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

—Prayer for Consecrated Persons © 2011, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. All Rights Reserved.

NOTICES

LENTEN COVERS FOR LPi PRINTING PARTNERS

LPi has created an exclusive series of bulletin covers for the Lenten season and Easter. The covers are available to LPi printing partners at no cost on our [Art & Media Portal](#); just search keyword "Lent 2015". The cover set is also available for purchase [here](#).

POPE'S MESSAGE FOR WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

Pope Francis' message for the 49th World Communications Day, "Communicating the Family: A Privileged Place of Encounter with the Gift of Love," was released on January 23, the vigil of the memorial of St. Francis of Sales, patron saint of communicators. The full text of the message can be viewed at:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20150123_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html.

2015 CATHOLIC SOCIAL MINISTRY GATHERING

The annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering is organized by the USCCB's Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development in collaboration with four other USCCB departments and sixteen national Catholic organizations. The 2015 Gathering will take place from Saturday, February 7 to Tuesday, February 10, 2015, in Washington DC to explore the theme of To Go Forth: Encountering Christ in the Heart of the World. To register, visit

<http://www.cvent.com/events/to-go-forth-encountering-christ-in-the-heart-of-the-world/event-summary-45867e9fce7444f9af42ed2b5d050392.aspx>.

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