

Meditations for Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Tuesday thoughts from Fr:

"From Mount Hor the children of Israel set out on the Red Sea road, to bypass the land of Edom. But with their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!"

In punishment the LORD sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died.

Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray the LORD to take the serpents away from us." So Moses prayed for the people, and the LORD said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and whoever looks at it after being bitten will live."

Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he lived."

This is today's first reading from the Book of Exodus. Above the reading is an image of the bronze serpent that Moses made so that those bitten by the serpents would be healed. That image is still used today in the area of healthcare. You can see them both side by side below. The modern day image is commonly seen at most any place that cares for the health of humans and veterinarians use this symbol as well.

What is important to note in the reading is that the people were tired of the long journey they were on. They were tired of the meager diet and, as a result, their patience wore thin and they complained against God.

We have been social distancing for two weeks now in an effort to slow the spread of the corona virus. At first, not being able to gather in groups did not seem to be too much of a problem. Then Mass was cancelled. Now Holy Week and Easter Masses won't be held, as would be the norm. Recently the President extended the social distancing requirement for an additional two weeks until the end of April.

The danger is that, like the Israelites on their journey, we will lose our patience with God and with one another. We are not accustomed to being tied down and having nowhere to go. With so many people working from home and kids being home from school, tempers are bound to flare and arguments unfold.

What can we do when stress and tension arises and patience begins to wear thin during this crazy time in life? How do we continue to remain upbeat and positive when the news is so negative and discouraging?

Here is my suggestion and what I, personally, have been trying to do. Instead of looking at a bronze serpent, look to the cross of Jesus. Stand there at the foot of the cross with Mary offering comfort and consolation to Jesus in his intense suffering. Offer your frustrations and lack of patience with others to Him and ask Him to help you remember that these are difficult days for everyone and we are all trying to find our way on this journey that is uncharted, just as it was for the Israelites of old. Everyone is trying to understand what is happening and what the new normal will be.

Look to Jesus. Keep your focus on Him. Just as the bronze serpent brought healing to the Israelites, the Cross of Our Lord brings healing and comfort to weary souls in this time of great upheaval. Our church is open during the day. So please come and look to Jesus with hope, faith and love. Look to Jesus.