



Lectionary Leaf*



Proper 28C

____ **1st Reading:** Isaiah 65:17-25

This passage lesson invites us to reflect on our relationship with all creation, especially our responsibilities to care for it. What does it suggest for you, for your church in that regard? Pretend that you are in charge of the future. You will plan it. What would the future look like and be like for them? How would they bring it about? Imagine what various parts of creation might say to us if they had voices (maybe they do) and we really listened. If trees could speak to us today, what might they say? If the creatures in the ocean could speak to us today, what might they say? The air? The water? The animals? Are we listening? For they all are speaking.

____ **2nd Reading:** Isaiah 12

Read this chapter as a response to the Isaiah 65 reading. Reflect on what it says to you about the past, the present, and the future.

____ **3rd Reading:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Who was the laziest person in your family? Why does Paul seem so concerned about those "walking in idleness"? Are you idle, a busybody, a worrywart, or a workaholic? What kind of work would you be doing if you could do it right now and why? How does our work in the world express our faith or does it? When have you felt yourself growing "weary in right doing"?

____ **4th Reading:** Luke 21:5-19

What about it puzzles you about this passage? Encourages you? Frightens you? Gives you hope? The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center tumbled down. Some teachers and preachers are actually saying this is part of God's plan, that this is a sign of the end of time. How would you respond to such thinking? How do you relate what Jesus talks about here to what Paul says above? What warning does Jesus give here?

A Picture of Peace

Long ago a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered. The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace? A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK: We believe in you, O God, for you have made the suffering of humanity your suffering. You have come to establish a kingdom of the poor and humble. Today we sing to you, because you are alive, you have saved us, you have made us free. Amen.

*Use *Lectionary Leaf* for your private or family devotions this week. Check off the passages as you read them. Reflect on and discuss the questions.

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Christ the King Sunday Year C

____ **1st Reading:** Jeremiah 23:1-6

On what branch of the family tree are you?

Who is the most successful person on your family tree? The best leader? The wisest? Who was the leader in history you most admire and why? What does it mean, "a Branch sprout from David's line"? Why do you think it was so important to the people to have a king in the lineage of David? This was a word of hope in a very desperate situation. What word of hope or bit of light has come to you recently in your own periods of darkness and despair? How has God surprised in you in giving some word of comfort or message of hope? How does Jesus fit or not fit into the view of the coming ruler or messiah as seen here? What does it mean to you to call Jesus "messiah"? What title or description for Jesus is the most meaning to you and why?

____ **2nd Reading:** Luke 1:68-79

This passage is known as the "Benedictus" or "Song of Zechariah" because the first word in the Latin version is "Benedictus" meaning "blessed." What are the blessings he lists here? If you were to write a song about your blessings, what would be the top five?

____ **3rd Reading:** Colossians 1:15-28

What's your favorite hymn about Christ and why? If you could use only one word to describe Jesus, what would it be and why? We believe that, if we want to know what God is like, we look to and listen to Jesus. So, what does Jesus teach us about who God is according to Paul in this passage?

____ **4th Reading:** Luke 23:33-43

What stands out to you most here about Jesus here? About the others around the cross? About the thieves? Have you prayed, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom"?

Where Is God?

"Where is God?" inquired the mind:
"To His presence I am blind. . . .
I have scanned each star and sun,
Traced the certain course they run;

I have weighed them in my scale,
And can tell when each will fail;
From the caverns of the night
I have brought new worlds to light;

I have measured earth and sky
Read each zone with steady eye;
But no sight of God appears
In the glory of the spheres."

But the heart spoke wistfully,
"Have you looked at Calvary?"

- Thomas C. Clark

PRAYER OF THE WEEK: In a world with many voices,
Lord,
all of them calling out for our allegiance,
we are reminded today that you are King,
our King and our Lord.
You deserve our greatest loyalty and obedience.
For you are love,
you are life,
you are all good things.
Amen.

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