

# THE GRRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 35

6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 18, 2007

## THEO-TIDBITS



Our new season of Theo-Tidbits has started!

Our next series is entitled: Sin and Grace and will take place on three successive Tuesdays in March (13/20/27).

In April, Susan Campbell will tackle the Paschal Mystery and in May, Sr. Hazel will look at annulments & divorce.

Check out the schedule on the bulletin boards for times and dates and places. We have business cards in a pocket on the posters...

## BAPTISM PREPARATION FOR INFANTS

Our next baptism preparation session for parents who wish their infants or young children (under 5 years old) to be baptized, will be held on Tuesday March 13 & Wednesday 14, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Parents are expected to attend both sessions. Sessions will be held in the Parish Office building at 1088 Gillett Street (the little grey house next to the double carport at the gym end of the school).

It is important that you phone the parish office at 564-4097 to pre-register, so we know how many to expect!

## OUR SECOND TABLE FOR TWO



Our second Table for Two took place on Friday, February 16. Seven pairs of folk arrived at the door, hungry and eager for an evening of fine dining! Chef Richard and his kitchen help served up an exquisite meal with a Mexican theme. All our guests enjoyed themselves immensely!

### Menu

- Appetizer:*    *Tex-Mex Appetizers*
- Soup:*        *Picante Black Bean Soup*
- Main Course:* *Beef Mole Tamale Pie*  
*Hot Mexican Bean & Rice Salad*  
*Colache*
- Dessert*      *Green Ice Cream*



For those of you who may have missed out, we are planning more Tables for Two in the future. Six or seven lucky people will receive a dinner invitation and are free to invite a dinner companion of their choice. And remember... it's FREE!! There are no strings attached and this isn't a recruiting drive. Just a chance to have a meal and fellowship! It's also a great way to build community!! Our next one is March 16!!

## SPRING IS COMING!!!

It is not too early to start thinking ahead and putting some plans into action. Remember last year's plant sale for St. Vincent de Paul? Well, we are planning another one this spring, and we are hoping that it will be bigger and better than last year. Last year, if you remember, we raised a little over \$1000 for the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and we would like to help again this year.



Everyone is invited to contribute to the sale. If you have a green thumb, now is the time to put it to work. Start those cuttings rooting, get some of the seedlings started, plan ahead on ways that you can contribute to the sale. There are already at least 75 geranium plants started, with maybe about 60 new geranium seedlings popping up out of the ground. The geraniums, of all varieties, were a big hit last year. If your plants need a haircut to get them bushing out, don't throw the clippings away. Put them in a glass of water! If you are into seeding perennials and want to contribute some seedlings, they would be more than welcome. Houseplants are an item that was in short supply last year, so if you want to start some houseplant cuttings, now is the time. Anything you can contribute will add to the success of the sale. We plan to make it more of a fair atmosphere this year, with some lawn chairs, coffee and perhaps a doughnut or two and lots of opportunity to browse, schmooze and get some plant material for your summer enjoyment.

## PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: The past couple of weeks has been filled with meetings of various kinds – Council of Priests, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Shepherd's Corner Board, Prince George Region ministers, School Council, Parish Pastoral Council and the Marriage Preparation evenings. Throw in a Table for Two, some hospital and home visits to the terminally ill, a funeral, visiting parishioners, and there has not been a lot of time to enjoy the wonderful winter weather. Soon we will be into Lent and that usually means a few more times for prayer and celebrations along with a bit more time for quiet and reflection. It is wonderful to see so many things happening in the community and the enthusiastic response to so many of the initiatives that have been undertaken so far this year.

Giselle: The last few weeks have been fairly full, with the usual spectrum of RCIA, Religious Education and parish meetings. We've just finished our bible study on Judith and now have a break for a few weeks before we tackle Tobit. In it's place, Lent is just around the corner, and that means preparation sessions for Confirmation & First Communion are starting soon! A busy time of the year!

## SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP: GRATITUDE

Over the next few articles, we will be reflecting on the spirituality of stewardship to help us look at stewardship in more practical terms for our daily prayer and living.

At the heart of Stewardship is a profound spirituality of life. With reflection, our lives can become an expression of gratitude – a thank you for the many gifts and blessings from God. What gift from God are you grateful for today?

Think back over the past week. Remember and name the people, places and things that brought new life to you. Say a simple prayer of gratitude for this abundance. Express gratitude to the important people in your life.

In a spirit of gratitude, individually thank each member of your family for something that you notice them doing that contributes to the good of family. Observe carefully, even small things make a difference.

How many ways can you say "thank you"? Review each day of last week, can you remember being grateful and saying thank you to family, co-workers, church community, or neighbours? How many ways did you discover?

Do you know that when Mass is celebrated it is a celebration of gratitude? The word "Eucharist" is a Greek word meaning to give thanks; it is a prayer of gratitude. At the Last Supper Jesus gave us the Eucharist to nourish our spiritual life. In response, we are called to develop an "attitude of gratitude". How is your attitude growing?

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

Marriage is an important sacrament in the life of our faith community, but one that we do not often think of consciously or encourage and support concretely unless we are actually celebrating a wedding. With all the discussion around the definition of marriage in our society lately, with the high rate of divorce and separation that we see, and with all the factors that work against couples living their marriage fully, we feel that it is vital to do everything we can to encourage and support those in our community who are married and to celebrate their lives and commitment.

In the past years, the four city parishes took turns hosting wedding anniversary celebrations, but those have lapsed. It was suggested by some in the parish that we look at reviving the celebrations for our own community.

We could have a monthly or bi-monthly celebration at our regular Saturday evening liturgy, concluding with a simple reception in the Conference Room after Mass.

Or we could have it on another evening of the week, perhaps on a Friday evening, again concluding with a reception. There will be a simple survey and a sign up in the pews next weekend so that you can help us in planning these celebrations! We want your ideas & your feedback!



## SEMINARIANS

Rector and Vener are presently at St. Joseph's Seminary and Newman Theological College in St. Albert. On the way there, they had a bit of an adventure. The truck broke down in the middle of nowhere during a snowstorm! They waited about 3 hours until a tow truck came to take them to Whitecourt for repairs. Life has been tamer since that day. They are taking some classes at Newman as well as doing ministry at St. Andrew's Parish. In March they will be taking driving lessons so that they can get licenses when they return to PG. They will return at the end of April and prepare for their ordination to the priesthood on May 18.

# SEASON OF LENT

## ASH WEDNESDAY ASHES



This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. The ashes are a sign of repentance on our part and remind us that we are not perfect, but are always in need of conversion.

We have several celebrations on Wednesday to offer you! The distribution of Ashes will take place at each celebration.

- 7:20 a.m. Mass
- 9:00 a.m. School Mass
- 7:00 p.m. Vespers

## LENTEN VESPERS

During the season of Lent we will be celebrating Vespers on every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m.

Vespers is a Latin word and refers to Evening Prayer. Once considered to be the exclusive preserve of monks and religious, Vatican II offered the Liturgy of the Hours (including Evening Prayer) to the entire Church.

Vespers is a wonderful way to close out your day, to come and sit in the silence, to pray with the community, and to offer praise and thanks to God. This Lent, why not come and give it a try.



## A HISTORY OF LENT (COLES NOTES VERSION)

From the very beginning, the early Christian community celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord. By the second century, this celebration extended 50 days, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. Over time, the early Christians began to prepare for this 50-day festival with fasting and penance, showing solidarity with the catechumens who were being prepared for baptism. This period of fasting and penance was only a few days at first, but was then extended to a week and by the 6th century, had become the traditional 40 days. It was still primarily a period in which the entire Christian community fasted, prayed and performed penance in solidarity with the catechumens who were preparing for baptism. With time, and the loss of the adult catechuminate, many of the baptismal overtones of Lent were lost. With Vatican II, the essential focus of Lent as a period of purification for the catechumens and candidates has been recovered.

## LENTEN PRAYER

Lent is traditionally a time to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

We have a variety of different prayer forms to offer you on our Lenten menu:

### Morning Prayer

Weekday mornings 7:00 a.m.

### Eucharist

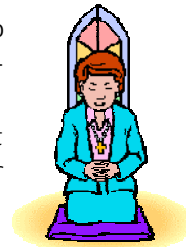
Weekday mornings 7:20 a.m.

### Vespers

Wednesday evenings 7:00 p.m.  
Sunday, March 18 4:30 p.m.

### Reconciliation Services

March 7 (STM) 7:00 p.m.  
March 22 (COS) 7:00 p.m.  
March 28 (IC) 7:00 p.m.  
April 3 (SHC) 7:00 p.m.



## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Lent is a traditionally a time to pray the Stations of the Cross, which have a long history in the Church (back to the early days!). Parishioners are encouraged to pray the stations individually during Lent.

If you would like to take part in a communal celebration of Stations of the Cross, Sacred Heart Cathedral will be praying them on the following Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

- Feb 23
- Mar 9
- Mar 16
- Mar 23
- Mar 30



## RITE OF ELECTION

This year the Rite of Election takes place on Sunday, February 25 at 2:30 p.m. in Sacred Heart of Cathedral.

The Rite of Election is part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and is the final preparation stage for those catechumens who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. The catechumens write their names in the Book of the Elect and are henceforth known as the Elect.

Our catechumen, Nikki, is continuing her faith journey as a catechumen for the next year.

We are encouraged to attend the Rite of Election and support catechumens from the other parishes.

## A GOOD APPETITE

Fasting is not an isolated discipline, but one of a trinity of holy practices: Prayer. Fasting. Almsgiving. Each of these gives support and meaning to the others. Prayer befriends the soul. It re-fixes our sacred purpose and turns us toward the tasks at hand. Fasting befriends the body — which is to say that the body is good, very good, and worthy of whatever form our fasting must take. Almsgiving befriends our neighbor with whom we share what we might otherwise have hoarded.

To fast, accompanied by prayer and almsgiving, is to be healed. Fasting is good for the body, the “body politic,” and the “mystical body.” Fasting helps to make the body whole.

Fasting is necessary now if we are ever to enjoy feasting. A good appetite allows us to enjoy the earthly gifts that we have been given. So fasting is not so much a deprecation of the flesh, but a sharpening of earthly joys. The Talmud says: “One will have to give an account on the judgment day of every good thing which one might have enjoyed — and did not.” Fasting helps us savor God’s goodness.

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## FASTING DURING LENT

We all know that Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. If we are over the age of 30 or 40, we probably remember the “old days” and what fasting during Lent meant. Catholics were required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent. Funny, but I never found that eating salmon on a Friday was a hardship! That wasn’t fasting... that was a treat!

Today, Catholics are still encouraged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Abstinence on the Fridays during Lent is optional, with a caveat. Rather than abstaining from meat, we are encouraged to abstain from other things, such as gossip.

Fasting and abstinence is not about us denying ourselves something that is good, in order to pig out once Easter rolls around. Rather, we are encouraged to fast and abstain from those things that draw us away from God. At the same time we are encouraged to add things that draw us closer to God. What are you doing for Lent?

## WHAT AM I DOING FOR LENT THIS YEAR?

In a little bit over two weeks we begin the season of Lent. So in the next issue of the Grapevine, we are including a little booklet which will help us work out a plan for celebrating Lent with Easter in mind. The booklet will invite you to fast, pray and give alms with a purpose. So often, Lent seems to slip by and we’re celebrating Easter before we know it. This year, may you arrive at the end of Lent ready to make new your baptism in the Easter Triduum.

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## CHRISM MASS MARCH 26

The Chrism Mass will take place on Monday, March 26 at Sacred Heart Cathedral at 7:30 p.m. All parishioners are invited to attend this wonderful celebration of the diocesan church. This is when the Holy Oils are blessed and consecrated!

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## THE LECTINARY DURING LENT

The Sundays of Lent follow an established pattern. The first Sunday is always the temptation of Jesus in the desert. The version proclaimed depends upon the Lectionary cycle. The same is true for the Second Sunday of Lent, on which we always hear the Transfiguration. From the Third to the Fifth Sunday, the readings are some of the most well-known and well-loved in the scriptures, and they serve as a fine context for the Lenten journey of repentance and renewal that we all undertake. They include the story of Moses and the burning bush, the parables of the fig tree and the prodigal son, and the story of the woman caught in adultery. Three Psalms that are given as the seasonal response. Of these three, Psalm 51 reigns supreme as a penitential psalm. It is the psalm that the Church sings at Morning Prayer every Friday, which is, traditionally, the weekly day of penance. Psalm 130 is also rich with language of repentance. Psalm 91 speaks of trust and faith in God during times of trial. During the weekdays of Lent, the scriptures focus on the traditional themes of the season: repentance; conversion and renewal.

During the second half of the season, the weekday scriptures include a semi-continuous reading of the Gospel of John. This begins on the second day of the fourth week with the story of the cure of the man at the pool of Bethesda. That day the Gospel begins, “There was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Thus begins the journey of Jesus in the Gospels of the next two weeks – up to Tuesday of Holy Week. His journey to Jerusalem is ours as well. As disciples, we are called to follow Christ, even to the cross, which was the destination of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. We, too, are called to face the cross in its many forms as we experience it in our own lives. The first readings for these weeks were chosen to reflect that aspect of the Gospels. *From ‘Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons, 2007’, LTP Publications*

## LENTEN DECOR

During Lent, the church decorations are generally kept to a sombre minimum. Flowers are generally not displayed, in order that the exuberance of the Easter decorations may stand out. There are of course exceptions, one being the 4th Sunday of Lent, also called Laetere Sunday.

## LENTEN MUSIC

During Lent, the music should be limited to just enough to accompany the singing. In general, instrumental pieces are discouraged. Again, to promote that more sombre atmosphere during Lent. We don't sing Allleuia during Lent, saving it up for a joyous display at Easter. Similarly, we don't sing the Gloria, except on major feasts such as St. Joseph and the Annunciation.

## BROWN BAG IT!!

During the season of Lent, we are all encouraged to practice almsgiving, i.e. giving to the less fortunate in our community. The St. Vincent de Paul Society seeks to respond to the needs of the poor in our community, but they rely on our help to do so. This Lent, we thought we would try something a little different. You're probably wondering what the paper bag is for... Well... the idea would be... during the next few weeks, whenever you go shopping, you are encouraged to pick up a few things from the items listed below. Stuff your brown bag as full as it will go (without breaking). Then, on Solidarity Sunday, March 25, we are all encouraged to bring our full brown bags to Mass. After the collection has been taken up, we will be encourage to bring our bags up in procession and deposit them in the sanctuary area.



Pasta  
Pasta Sauce  
Rice  
Dry Stew  
Canned Stew  
Flour  
Canned Beans or Peas  
Dry Beans or Peas  
Canned Fruit  
Canned Vegetables  
Canned Meat  
Canned Fish  
Dry Soup

Canned Soup  
Peanut Butter  
Breakfast cereal  
Canned Milk  
Powdered Milk  
100% Fruit Juice  
Crackers  
Cereal bars  
Tea  
Hot Chocolate  
Infant Formula  
Baby Food

## FED RIGHTLY

We have a basic, unspoken fear of being deprived of food. So we try to outfox the caprices of nature and its seasons, hoping that we never have to go hungry. But something has run amok when fear of being deprived of food drives us to manipulating, bullying, controlling, overproducing, depleting, hoarding and consuming — not just food, but fuel and forests, water and whatever resource we cannot live without. Ravenous for something, we try to still our anxiety with whatever brings comfort most quickly. With a voracious need, we bully our way into the world's stores and consume everything in sight.



Frederick Buechner's definition of a glutton is true — of individuals and of communities: A glutton is one who raids the icebox for a cure for spiritual malnutrition! The habit of "raiding" spoils our appetite, even as it leaves us ever unsatisfied. The late M. F. K. Fisher wrote: "I cannot count the good people I know who would be better if they bent their spirits to the study of their own hungers."

So take a moment to reexamine cravings, hungers, yearnings, compulsions and impulses as natural and right — *but in need of being fed at the right level*. Fast from instant gratifications.

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## FASTING IDEAS

### To Abstain:

Coffee  
Caffeine  
Computer or Cell Phone Use  
Alcohol  
Cigarettes  
Driving  
Shopping  
Eating Out  
Energy Use (gas, hydro, etc)  
Gossiping  
Meat / Red Meat  
Swearing  
Sweets  
Television

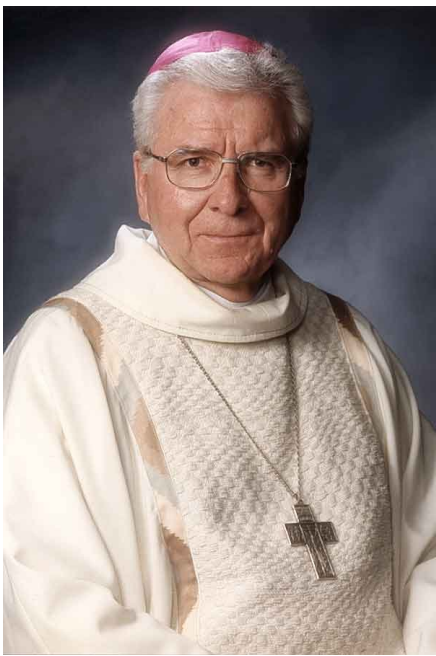
### To Add:

More Prayer Time  
Sharing More Money & Time  
Reading More Scripture  
Visiting the Sick

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# LENTEN PARISH MISSION MARCH 3-7

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THEME:  
Eucharist

PRESENTER:  
Bishop Gerry Wiesner OMI

BOOK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!!

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Bishop Gerry will preside & preach on  
Mar 3, Saturday (7 pm) & Mar 4, Sunday (9 & 11 am)

### Special Sessions

Mar 4, Sunday—7:00 pm  
Mar 5, Monday—7:00 pm  
Mar 6, Tuesday—7:00 pm

Vespers & Reconciliation  
March 7, Wednesday  
at 7:00 p.m.

## INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Please remember the sick and suffering in our community and families, especially: Helen Roberts, Ron Roth, Sharon Balkcom, Joseph Glasser (Kathy Labonte's father), Beverly Teegee, Margaret George, Teddy French, Becca Kennedy, Judy Nelson, Nick Palfy, Anne Whyte, Kai Peterson, Henry Alexander, Suzanne LeFebvre, Mary Pfliger, Ann Beaudette (Fr. Richard's mother), Valerie Kabai, Cyril Abreau, Rob Marwood, Dorothy Smith, Sr. Margaret Quinn, Detta Quinn (Sr. Margaret's sister).



## REJOICING & REMEMBERING

In the hope of the resurrection, we bid farewell to:

Hubert McKay  
Mary Anderson



## OUR WEBSITE

Check out our website for information on the parish.  
[www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg](http://www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg)

## CONFIRMATION & FIRST COMMUNION

Our date for celebrating the sacraments of Confirmation & First Communion with the Grade 2's is Sunday, April 22 at 2:00 p.m. The preparation sessions will take place on the following Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the school gym: Feb 20 & 27, Mar 13, 20 & 27, Apr 17 & 24. Please fill out the registration form you received!

## MINISTRIES IN OUR COMMUNITY: LAY PRESIDERS

Over the past couple of decades, it has become more and more common for parish communities to have at least occasional weekends when there is no priest available to preside at the Eucharist. In some parishes, there is no resident priest, and in other parishes the priest who is resident has responsibility for other parish communities as well. There are also times when the resident priest cannot secure a replacement for himself while he is away on vacation or retreat, at meetings or ill.



In these cases, when a priest is not available to preside at Eucharist with the community, the community is still encouraged to gather, to celebrate their faith, to listen to God's word, to share fellowship and to receive communion. It is essential, in fact, that the community gather, as we are called to be a people of prayer. While we certainly are called to pray as individuals, in private, we are called into community when we are baptized and so we have community prayer and celebration as a primary focus. St. Paul reminds us that through baptism, we become part of the one Body of Christ, each of us members of that body and contributing to the life and the work of the body. The Second Vatican Council calls us to recognize our baptismal priesthood, to respond to our call to be people of prayer and to enter into a full, active and conscious participation in the prayer life of the Church.

When the community gathers, there is need for someone to lead the community in prayer. That role falls to the presider. When there is no ordained minister, then a lay member of the community is called to preside over the prayer of the community at that gathering. Lay presidors make it possible for a community without a priest to gather for liturgical prayer, and they deserve our fullest support and encouragement as well as our prayers.

Presidors have first of all a symbolic function. In the presider, the Church throughout the ages is made present in this gathering of the Church. We are not in isolation, but in continuity with the Church from the time of Christ. The presider is also the link to all the communities gathered throughout the world, so in a sense the presider also makes present the churches gathered as we are. The presider gathers the community, leads the community in prayer, directs the celebration, is conscious of all those gathered and reaches out to include them in the celebration and to encourage full, active conscious participation in the celebration.

The lay presider leads the liturgy of hours and the Sunday celebration of the Word, enabling the assembly to pray the prayer of the church, to celebrate the word, to speak as one people and to offer heartfelt praise to God. At times lay presidors are also called upon to lead the prayers for the dead, to preside at funerals and burials, to witness marriages and to baptize.

In our diocese, we have the Lay Formation program, during which participants learn the arts of presiding and preaching. In our parish community we also have workshops when needed to train presidors and to help all who fulfill this role in the community to develop our skills and talents for this ministry. We are grateful to those who have accepted to lead us in prayer and we offer them the support of our prayers.

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

There are several different options for marriage preparation. For those sessions offered at St. Mary's, please contact the parish office to register. For the Engaged Encounter weekends, please call 964-2805 to register.

Mar 23-26: Engaged Encounter Weekend

May 11-13: Engaged Encounter Weekend

## REMEMBER THE LISTENING CENTRES?

The Listening Centres are small, neighbourhood faith-sharing groups that were set up during the Oblate Parish Mission in the Fall of 2005. It was hoped that these groups would continue to function after the Mission, but most have not.

There is a small group of people in the parish who would like to get a listening centre going on a bi-weekly basis, but they would like more members to be involved. The plan is that the group would meet at the rectory in one of the meeting rooms. If you are interested in exploring this possibility, you can contact Terry Bopp 564-2635, Paul Laliberte 563-8465 or Dorothy Reimer 562-3749.

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## UNLIKELY HEROES & HEROINES OF THE BIBLE

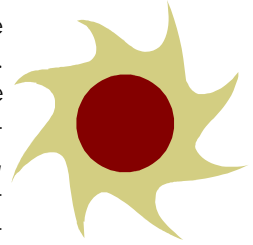
Our study of Judith is finished, but in a few weeks, we'll take a look at Tobit.

Book of Tobit  
Mar 14/21/28

@ 7:30 pm (after Vespers)  
We'll continue to meet in the Parish Office Meeting Room.

## DAILY PROPHET: THIRD ISAIAH

Yes, there is one more Isaiah! The last few chapters of the Book of Isaiah (Ch. 55-66) are collectively called Third Isaiah. If you remember, First Isaiah (Ch 1-39) was written just before the Exile and was pretty much a doom and gloom message, urging the people to pick up their socks and if they didn't do so, well, disaster was just around the corner. Second Isaiah (Ch 40-54) was written during the Exile and is much cheerier, comforting the people and letting them know that release from captivity is just around the corner. Third Isaiah was written shortly after the return from Exile, as the people are getting resettled back in the land and in Jerusalem. As you might expect, people being people, they're starting to slip back into their old ways. They're more concerned with planting crops and harvesting and making a quick buck, than they are with faithfulness to Yahweh. It's the same old story!



In the last few issues, we looked at Haggai & Zechariah, who both wrote after the return from Exile. Their main concern was with rebuilding the Temple and making sure that Temple worship resumed. Third Isaiah comes from a slightly different perspective. He is not content with Temple worship, for it can easily become empty worship. People begin to feel complacent: "I worship in the Temple, I tithe, I give to the poor. Therefore I am right with God". Third Isaiah says "No", it isn't enough to go through the outer motions of worship, what is really important is the disposition of the heart. Third Isaiah reminds the people that the promises that God made are still valid, but that they need to pick up their socks.

On another note, Third Isaiah steps a bit outside the box and says that even the Gentiles will be part of the glories of the new age. They too will come to worship Yahweh. This contrasts with some of the earlier prophets who were quite adamant that the Gentiles would always be on the outside, and would never participate in the reign of God.

If we look back over the three sections of the Book of Isaiah, we might begin to wonder what unites them. The Jews obviously saw a theological unity that caused them to stitch the three sections together into a cohesive whole. One overarching theme that unites the book is the idea that Yahweh is the Holy One of Israel. A second theme is that Yahweh punishes human sin but will save those who trust in the Holy One of Israel. A third theme is that Yahweh is Lord of all nations, but relates in a special way to Israel. Unlike some of the other prophets, who wrote at a certain time (before, during or after the Exile), the Book of Isaiah is unique in that it gives us the whole spectrum of pre, during and post Exilic thought, all wrapped up in one nice package.

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## SCRIPTURE INSIGHTS

"I would not harm the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 26:23). David's words seem incredulous. How could he pass up the chance to kill the man who was seeking to kill him? Actually, this reading is not the first such incident. In Chapter 24, David had likewise let a similar opportunity go by. David's words call all of us to account. Who among us has this same attitude of reverence and respect for another because of what God has made that person to be?

Every human being is deserving of reverence and respect because of who God has made them to be - a person created in God's own image and likeness. Every human being - yes, even the "enemy", deserves our reverence and respect because God created them in God's own image and likeness. And Jesus' words in today's Gospel tell us precisely how we are to treat them. If we do as we are commanded, not only will we be imitating David towards Saul, we will be like Jesus. We will act with mercy. Mercy is a preeminent characteristic of God. Luke's Gospel, more than any of the others, gives this prominence. Let us take Jesus' words to heart that we might be and do mercy.

*From 'At Home with the Word, 2007', LTP Publications*