

Our Faith on Sunday

LITURGY

5th Sunday of Lent (B)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Cf. Ps 42:1-2
**Give me justice, O God,
 and plead my cause against a nation that
 is faithless.**

**From the deceitful and cunning rescue
 me, for you, O God, are my strength.**

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34
*I will make a new covenant and never call
 their sin to mind.*

PSALM: Ps 50: 3-4. 12-15 R. v12

R) A pure heart create for me, O God.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
 In your compassion blot out my offence.
 O wash me more and more from my guilt
 and cleanse me from my sin. **(R)**

A pure heart create for me, O God,
 put a steadfast spirit within me.
 Do not cast me away from your presence,
 nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **(R)**

Give me again the joy of your help;
 with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
 that I may teach transgressors your ways
 and sinners may return to you. **(R)**

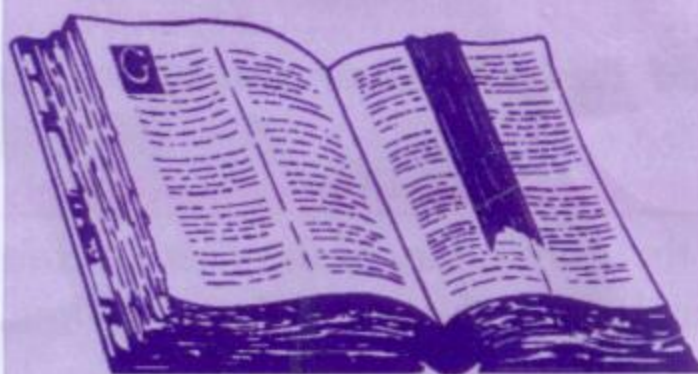
SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:7-9
*He learnt to obey and became for all the
 source of eternal salvation.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Jn 12:26
**Glory to you, O Christ, you are the
 Word of God!**

**If a man serves me, says the Lord,
 he must follow me;
 wherever I am,
 my servant will be there too.
 Glory to you, O Christ, you are the
 Word of God!**

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33
*If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and
 dies, it yields a rich harvest.*

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Jn 12:24
**Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain
 of wheat
 falls to the ground and dies, it remains a
 single grain.
 But if it dies, it bears much fruit.**



GOSPEL REFLECTION



On March 25th, 1858, over 160 years ago, Our Lady revealed her name, "*I am the Immaculate Conception*", to a young girl in Lourdes, France, St. Bernadette Soubirous. Bernadette is not a saint because Our Lady appeared to her. She is a saint because she and her whole family lived Our Lord's words as we have just heard them read today: "*...anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life*". Admiring crowds flocked to see 'the visionary'; the first vision occurred on February 11th and by March 25th the crowds were estimated at over 1000! All during that time the Soubirous family, who were desperately poor, refused all offers of money or food; they "*hated*" their lives in this world in order to follow Jesus more faithfully. Not literally 'hating' of course; they were known for their cheerful acceptance of their

circumstances and Bernadette was known as lively and fun loving. Never did she or they complain, least of all to Our Lady, of the poverty of the family or of her own physical sufferings, which were considerable all through her life (she suffered from chronic asthma). She is truly the "wheat grain" that dying to itself has "*produced a rich harvest*".

EVANGELII GAUDIUM (JOY OF THE GOSPEL)



I. DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD A "THROWAWAY" WORLD

(CONTINUED)

21. Some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human development. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality, with the result that "new forms of poverty are emerging". The claim that the modern world has reduced poverty is made by measuring poverty with criteria from the past that do not correspond to present-day realities. In other times, for example, lack of access to electric energy was not considered a sign of poverty, nor was it a source of hardship. Poverty must always be understood and gauged in the context of the actual opportunities available in each concrete historical period.

The Still Waters of Beauty* PURIFICATION THROUGH SUFFERING

'The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous . . .' So do not be afraid, but work; the eyes of the Lord rest upon you.' . . . and his ears toward their cry.' 'What more do you want? If the head of the family in a large household did not listen to his servant's grievances, then the servant would complain and say: 'How much we are suffering and no one hears us!' But can you say that of God: 'How much I am suffering and no one hears me!'

Perhaps you say: 'If he heard me, then he would free me from my troubles; I call out to him and still I am afflicted'. If only you keep to his ways, then he will hear you when you are in distress.

But he is a surgeon, and there is still something rotten in you. You cry out, but still he cuts and will not remove his hand until he has cut away as much as seems right. Indeed, the cruel surgeon is the one who hears a man and spares his wound and corruption. Don't mothers rub their children in the bath for their health? And don't the children cry out at their hands? And are they then cruel in not hearing and sparing the tears? Aren't these women full of affection? Still the children cry out, and they are not spared. And our God, too, is full of love and, therefore, seems not to hear so that he can heal and spare us for all eternity.

*Augustine of Hippo Edited by Oliver Davies Published by New City

