

2010 Liturgical Year C

It has been said that the New Testament lies in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. The Old Testament Reading and the New Testament readings for the liturgical calendar help us understand the meaning of this statement. The letters and books of the New Testament other than the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) help to guide us in our applications of the messages found in the Gospels.

This is the start on Lessons At A Glance
Jack Vessels moved to Mississippi from
St. Ignatius House but continued Email

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for NOV 29, 2009 - 1st Advent: Jer 33.14-16; 1Thess 3.12-4.2; LK 21.21-28,34-36

I WILL FULFILL MY PROMISE & RAISE UP A JUST SHOOT FOR DAVID.
HE WILL DO WHAT IS RIGHT & JUST IN THE LAND.

'Be vigilant at all times, & pray that you have the strength to escape
the tribulations that are imminent & stand before the Son of God.

During the day: To be strong, be weak. Weakness is the human condition that, acknowledged, requires the divine partner's power. The harmony of wills in a common purpose is invincible.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer, when just & right, encourages the soul in tribulation. Obstacles to grace removed, perseverance in prayer enlivens the will with greater trust in the Son of God. So disposed, the common humanity of both achieves the Father's purpose.

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for DEC 6, 2009 - 2nd Advent Baruch 5.1-9; Phil 1.4-11; LK 3.1-6

JERUSALEM, TAKE OFF YOUR ROBE OF MOURNING & MISERY;
PUT ON THE SPLENDOR OF GLORY FROM GOD FOREVER.

The word of God came to John, son of Zechariah; he went throughout the
region proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin.

During the day: Put off mourning & misery, & discover the splendor of forgiving. Holding grudges makes no one miserable but yourself. You feel like you're owed an apology; so does God. Learn from him the freedom that comes from permanent pardon, even unsought.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is remaining immersed in the waters of baptism. Cool & refreshing, prayer rests in the knowledge that God's glory is in life renewed endlessly, whenever & wherever he finds sincere repentance. True sorrow is true life.

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
DEC 13, 2009 - 3rd Advent: Zeph 3.14-18; Phil 4.4-7; LK 3.10-18

THE LORD YOUR GOD IS IN YOUR MIDST, A MIGHTY SAVIOR. HE WILL REJOICE OVER
YOU WITH GLADNESS, & RENEW YOU IN HIS LOVE.

John answered them all, 'I am baptizing you with water. But one mightier than I is coming: he will
baptize you with the Holy Spirit & fire.'

During the day: Practice renewal: The 'Good News' is always good & always new; ponder it daily. Through faith, human life is plugged into the divine--a constantly renewing combination. Exploit it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayerfully is the only way to receive good news; in fact, all news received prayerfully is good. Reality has two dimensions, the spiritual & the material; perceived spiritually, the material, too, is of God. At his service.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for DEC 20, 4th Advent: Micah 5.1-4; Heb 10.5-10; LK 1.39-45**

BETHLEHEM, FROM YOU SHALL COME FORTH FOR ME ONE
WHO IS TO RULE IN ISRAEL. HE SHALL STAND FIRM & SHEPHERD
HIS FLOCK BY THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD.

'Blessed are you among women, blessed the fruit of your womb. Blessed are you
who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

During the day: Entertain your doubts with a willingness to be enlightened; Truth is approachable, even when too vast to be grasped, Affirmation is sometimes of the will--living truth has its own authority, capable of communicating certainty. You'll recognize it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is communion with the always communicable divine; shadows lift at Its behest, not ours. Prayer's freedom permits acknowledgment of a dimension that transcends the merely human, satisfied we're made for more than that.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for DEC 27, Holy Family: 1Sam 1.20-28; 1John 3.1-2,21-14 LK 2.41-52**

HANNAH TOLD ELI, 'I PRAYED FOR THIS CHILD, & THE LORD GRANTED
MY REQUEST. NOW I IN TURN GIVE HIM TO THE LORD.'
HANNAH LEFT SAMUEL THERE.

After 3 days they found him in the temple. His mother said to him, 'Why have you
done this to us?' He replied, 'Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'

During the day: Be grateful for everything. It's all gift, with strings attached--use it to do good, the good of others. God's grace is interpersonal, active for both server & served, gratitude, not credit, the common sentiment of both.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer asks questions, but gets few answers-- explanations are not part of God's revelation. Faith supposes both doubt & trust, in that order--blind trust.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JAN 3, Epiphany: Isa 60.1-6; Eph 3.1-6; MT 2.1-12**

RISE UP IN SPLENDOR, JERUSALEM! YOUR LIGHT HAS COME. NATIONS
SHALL WALK BY YOUR LIGHT, & KINGS BY YOUR SHINING RADIANCE.

'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We observed his star at its
rising, & have come to pay him homage.'

During the day: Pay homage to your maker. Ponder the reasons he had for making you. What of himself did he put in you? Consider your fidelity to his purpose: what need the newborn son correct?

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the intelligent creature's attention to its maker. Prayer fathoms the mystery of one's own existence, seeks its source, rests in its discovery. Prayer responds harmoniously to the re-creative character of the encounter.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JAN 10, Jesus' Baptism: Isa 40.1-11; Tit 2.11-14,3.4-7; LK 3.15-22**

HERE COMES WITH POWER THE LORD GOD. HERE IS HIS REWARD WITH HIM, HIS
RECOMPENSE BEFORE HIM. LIKE A SHEPHERD HE FEEDS HIS FLOCK, IN HIS ARMS HE
GATHERS HIS LAMBS.

John said, 'I am baptizing you with water. The one to come is mightier than I.
He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit & in fire.'

During the day: Allow God to shepherd you, to carry you in his arms. His almighty power is at your disposal; count on it, but remember it's for the good of others. Your reward is your recompense.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is re immersion in the Spirit. The values & attitudes of Jesus planted at baptism require attentive cultivation; prayer is the individual's conscious submission to the Spirit's purifying fire. Inflaming the will to seek greater good, it burns away at the selfishness.

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JAN 17, 2nd of yr: Isa 62.1-5; 1Cor 12.4-11; JN 2.1-12**

YOU SHALL BE CALLED BY A NEW NAME PRONOUNCED BY THE MOUTH
OF THE LORD, FOR THE LORD DELIGHTS IN YOU. AS A BRIDEGROOM
REJOICES IN HIS BRIDE, SO SHALL YOUR GOD REJOICE IN YOU.

Jesus performed this first of his signs at Cana in Galilee. Thus did he
reveal his glory, & his disciples believed in him.

During the day: Rejoice, the Lord delights in you! He loves you just the way you are. Sure, he wants you to improve, & he'll be glad to help; but it has to be *your* choice. Love is never forced.

ABOUT PRAYER: I'm aware of you, Jesus, & aware you're aware of me as *part of you!* Prayer is learning to be you: to think your thoughts, to will your will. You use me, & I'm available. Take over!

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JAN 24, 3rd of yr: Neh 8.2-10; 1COR 12.12-30; LK 1.1-4, 4.14-21

ALL THE PEOPLE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO THE BOOK OF THE LAW. THEN NEHEMIAH SAID, 'DO NOT BE SAD! REJOICING IN THE LORD MUST BE YOUR STRENGTH.'

Jesus was handed the book of Isaiah & read: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

He has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.' Then he said to them,

'Today this passage is fulfilled in your hearing.'

During the day: Shrug off sadness; it robs your strength. Truth is, God's on your side, no matter who (or what) is on the other. That is, if you're on His! Could be that's the reason you're sad: he's letting you know you're not. Think it through, & act accordingly.

ABOUT PRAYER: You exist, Lord, & I am yours. You love me, & I trust you. You use me, & I'm available. Prayer removes my doubts, renews my strength. Your grace is always there, & it's always enough. Much obliged!

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Reflections for JAN 31, 4th of yr: Jer 1.4-5,17-19; 1Cor 12.31-13.13; LK 4.21-30

'BEFORE I FORMED YOU IN THE WOMB, I KNEW YOU.

BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, I DEDICATED YOU.

I AM WITH YOU TO DELIVER YOU,' SAYS THE LORD.

At these words they led him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, intending to hurl him over the edge. He went straight through their midst & walked away.

During the day: When you're well-intentioned, walk straight through the difficulties. One way or the other, what God wants gets done. Learn to evaluate results through his perspective; get used to building on divine success in human failure.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer dives beneath the turbulence of surface problems, swims with strength through the conditions & circumstances of God's allowance. His will is prayer's compass, & both his power & his wisdom are its security. Refreshed, back on the surface, one finds things are calmer.

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Reflections for FEB 7, 5th of yr: Isa.6.1-8; 1Cor 15.1-11; LK 5.1-11

SAW THE LORD ON A LOFTY THRONE, SERAPHIM STATIONED ABOVE. I HEARD THE LORD SAY, 'WHOM SHALL I SEND? WHO WILL GO FOR US?' I SAID, 'HERE I AM; SEND ME.'

Peter said, 'Leave me, Lord. I am a sinful man.' Jesus said, 'Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men.'

During the day: Face down fears. They're blind. The mind isn't; It's designed to consider threats, & find a solution. Faith presumes the threat is divinely permitted, & it's God's responsibility to provide needed light & courage. Be available.

ABOUT PRAYER: Here I am, Lord, send me. You know my strengths & weaknesses, & I've long since learned you

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Reflections for FEB 14, 6th of yr: Jer 17.5-8; 1Cor 15.12-20; LK 6.17,20-26

CURSED THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN HUMAN BEINGS, WHO SEEKS HIS STRENGTH IN FLESH, WHOSE HEART TURNS AWAY FROM THE LORD. HE IS LIKE A BARREN BUSH IN THE DESERT. 'Woe to you rich, for your consolation is now. Woe to you who are full; you shall go hungry. You who laugh now shall weep in your grief.'

During the day: Seek God in everything & everybody; otherwise, you'll get only what you're looking for. It's all his, yours to use as authorized, always for the good of others. Don't lose sight of reality.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer measures our needs & attachments, from God's perspective. Prayer fathoms God's purposes, calibrates our use of time, talents & possessions accordingly. Divine integrity defines fulfillment.

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Reflections for FEB 21, 1st Lent: Dt. 26.1-10; Rm 10.8-13; LK 4.1-13

MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE, 'WE CRIED TO THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS, & HE HEARD OUR CRY & SAW OUR AFFLICTION. YOU SHALL DECLARE BEFORE THE LORD: 'I HAVE NOW BROUGHT YOU THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SOIL YOU HAVE GIVEN ME.'

The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to turn into bread.' Jesus said, 'Not on bread alone shall man live.'

During the day: Let the Lord know when you need help; express gratitude before you get it knowing you will, though you may not recognize it when you do. He knows your *real* needs, & tough love may be his answer. Hang loose.

ABOUT PRAYER: In time of affliction, prayer is not necessarily for release, but rather for the strength to accept it & perceive God's purpose. The inner peace that accompanies mature prayer discovers & follows the Spirit at work.

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for FEB 28, 2nd Lent: Gn 15. 5-12,17-18; Phil 3.17-4.1; LK 9.28-36
GOD SAID TO ABRAM, 'LOOK UP AT THE SKY & COUNT THE STARS. JUST SO
SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE. I AM THE LORD WHO BROUGHT YOU F
ROM UR TO GIVE YOU THIS LAND AS A POSSESSION.

Two men were talking with him, Moses & Elijah. From the cloud came a
voice saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to Him.'

During the day: Learn to listen. Not just to the other, but to God in the other, Who directs rather than informs, enriching our ponderings with his own divine insights. The other communicates self to the attentive listener, their mutual service God's handiwork.

ABOUT PRAYER: A prayerful person remains alert to God's communications, whatever the words or intentions of the other. Indeed, the other is perceived prayerfully (i.e. from God's perspective), & the inspired service discerned & assumed.

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Reflections for MAR 7, 3rd Lent: Ex 3.1-8,13-15; 1Cor 10.1-6,10-12; LK 13.1-9
AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO MOSES IN FIRE FLAMING OUT OF A BUSH. THE BUSH,
THOUGH ON FIRE, WAS NOT CONSUMED

The vinedresser said, 'Leave it another year while I hoe around it & manure it;
then perhaps it will bear fruit. If not, it shall be cut down.'

During the day: Be a burning bush, unconsumed. Let your energy & enthusiasm communicate to others the Lord who lives in you. Be the light & warmth that rekindles the hope that survives setbacks, turns them into challenges.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer never quits, never gives up. After failures, keeps us ready for the next one; after success, always sharing.

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Reflections for MAR 14th, 4th Lent: Josh 5.9-12; 2Cor 5.17-21; LK 15.1-3,11-32
THEY ATE THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND: UNLEAVENED CAKES &
PARCHED GRAIN. AFTER THE DAY ON WHICH THEY ATE THE
PRODUCE OF THE LAND, THE MANNA CEASED.

'Father, I have sinned against God & against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.
Treat me like one of your hired hands.'

During the day: Don't regret the loss of special favors. Trim your needs, be satisfied with what you've got. A new sense of freedom will more than compensate.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer dives deep & finds the hidden truths at the bottom of the barrel. Freely, the humble sinner entrusts his needs to a loving, forgiving Father.

