

## **IV LENT 2015**

### **SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH**

#### **FATHER CRAIG LOONEY**

**GEN. 18.1 GAL 4.21 ST. JOHN 6.1**

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Come to me to be refreshed...the loving invitation we get from Jesus at every Mass. And there is more than enough Jesus to refresh everyone...he doesn't want anyone to go home unsatisfied.

Life has its ups and downs...things go wrong and people misbehave. Both the Epistle and Gospel are about God restoring lives and providing refreshment and giving strength to people who often find themselves confused and overwhelmed.

Our friend Paul often found himself called upon to restore order in Church...today it's "those Galatians" that needed his help. Some members of the parish were saying to be a good Christian one first had to be a good Jew by strictly obeying all of the Law of Moses.

Paul responds by calling the Galatians foolish. He tells them to stop and take a fresh look at things. Partisanship in the Church is hostile and disruptive. The Church is one body...one family...religious, political or socio-economic upbringing does not matter. God wants his Church to be full of hospitable people...because he is hospitable.

The story about Abraham and Sarah our friend Paul talks about is found in the Book of Genesis. It is a story about hospitality, life's burdens and God's promise to Abraham and Sarah to relieve their burdens and restore their lives...his promise to refresh them.

Without some background information the importance of the story is mostly lost on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christians. We are 4000 years removed from Abraham and Sarah. One thing has never changed since their time...God always keeps his promises...we are inclined to break ours.

Abraham and Sarah did not have a son...for them a burden...they believed it was a sign of God's displeasure. One day three strangers were passing by...it was a blessing from God to have strangers come to your house and you were expected to show them hospitality...give them a refreshing meal...before sending them on their way.

The strangers brought good news to Abraham and Sarah...God heard their prayers and they would have the son they had prayed for.

Abraham and Sarah were both over 90 years old. When they heard what the strangers said...he laughed...she laughed...they both laughed...at the thought of having a baby. They didn't believe what they heard was possible. They didn't trust God to carry through with his promise.

Abraham and Sarah decide to help God with his plan...they hire Hagar to be surrogate mother. And Hagar gave birth to Ishmael...but he was not the son God had promised to Abraham and Sarah...he told them to try again. And Isaac was born nine months later. God keeps his promises...he restores...he refreshes.

The Church is where we come to get restored and refreshed in Word and Sacrament. Paul calls the Church our Mother...a heavenly Jerusalem...a foretaste of our life in heaven. Mothers nurture and guide us and keep us out of harms way. Mothers restore us...they refresh us. Jesus wants to make certain everyone gets the message and has the opportunity to get restored and refreshed.

Jesus fed thousands from a few scraps of food. He asks us to trust him to take care of our material needs. He asks us to trust God to "give us this day our daily bread". Jesus had his disciples gather up the leftovers, so nothing was wasted...nothing was left behind. Jesus took a little food and made it into a lot of food. The crowd went home full and refreshed after a good meal.

We get spiritually refreshed every time we receive Holy Communion. Jesus took ordinary food of daily life...bread and wine...gave it to his disciples with the words..."This is my Body; this is my Blood". What we eat and drink at every Mass is the Body and Blood of Jesus...not dead symbols. We get fed with the extraordinary gift of his own Flesh and Blood and the promise of life in heaven.

We must do our part to show God's love and hospitality...we cannot keep the Good News to ourselves...send out the invitation to others to come and get restored and refreshed...it does not matter who they are or where they come from...satisfaction is guaranteed...to all who want to experience God's love and hospitality.

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