

Lenten Homily
March 22, 2010

Love the Lord and his commandments. Fear not, for he is with us here and now. Repent day by day. These instructions for daily living found in today's Collect and Psalm are clear and concise. Follow them, and surely, goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. Easier said than done? Easier said than done, indeed!

The story of Susanna sounds just like the stuff of which scandalous TV news is made—featuring the disgraceful downfall of two lustful judges. These judges previously had been honored and trusted servants before abusing their authority. Their immorality is no different than that of today's corrupt politicians, myriad superstar entertainers and various world class athletes with various world class problems. The current examples are too numerous to name. Suffice it to say that the hypocrisy of the judges sounds all too familiar. What happens next is less familiar.

A young lad, Daniel, comes to Susanna's rescue. He shouted with a loud voice at a crowd ready to execute her. "All the people turned to him and asked, 'What is this you are saying?'" Imagine how Daniel felt when the mob turned to him. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he boldly defended this innocent woman, Susanna, and saved her life with only a few words of truth.

In today's Gospel, an unnamed woman who was "caught in the very act of committing adultery" is brought before Jesus by an angry and conniving crowd. Jesus saved the woman's life by simply stating, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Just as Daniel defended Susanna, Jesus boldly defended the unnamed woman with only a few words of Truth. Today, I urge you to ponder why the innocent Susanna and the adulterous unnamed woman both received the Love of God which passes all understanding.

Margaret Guenther of this parish recently challenged us in her sermon to be bold in our Lenten journey and to beware that fear is the "destroying opposite" of God's expansive and enduring love. Today's readings reinforce her challenge. Love the Lord; and his commandments; fear not, for he is with us here and now; repent day by day; and surely, goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Howard Hill