

not perfect, we should strive each day with each person to obey God and build one another's faith through support and accountability.

Genesis 24:1-27; Hebrews 12:3-11; John 7:1-13

### **Saturday, February 7**

John 7:14-36 *About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.* (v.14 RSV)

Jesus, the great teacher. When he talked, people listened. They were captured by what he said. Why?

Jesus told them: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If any man's will is to do God's will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority."

Doing God's will. This is a principle that runs all through life: we learn by doing. A lawyer may learn all that the law books can teach, but until he gets into court or negotiates a contract, he never really learns.

And for whose glory? Jesus did not seek his own glory. He spoke for God when and where he was called. He did not care whether he spoke to one person or a great crowd. What he said was always true and always compassionate, always from God, and he did not care whether anybody praised him or not. Others, too, may teach much that is true, but if their hearts are wrong, it will come without power and will not accomplish much. But if they are intent on God's message, care less of publicity and opinion, if they seek to get across what God has said, we can trust that kind of teacher and thank God for them.

Genesis 24:28-38, 49-51; Psalms 75, 76; Hebrews 12:12-29

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## **Good News Daily**

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### **Sunday, February 1**

Mark 8:22-30 *And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see men; but they look like trees, walking." Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly.* (vv.22-25 RSV)

This miracle of Jesus is the only one he ever performed in two stages. In every other circumstance he spoke the word, and instantly the person was made whole. Jesus wants his disciples to see that they are like this blind man; that they, and we, need our eyes opened in two stages, as this blind man did.

Later in this passage, Peter identified Jesus as the Messiah, and that was the first stage. The disciples saw the things that were happening and observed what Jesus was doing and their eyes were being opened. This is what Jesus wanted them to know. He had been working with them to lead them to this understanding of who he was.

But now, once they know, he does a strange thing. He told them to tell no one about it. Why not send them out to tell the world? As in the healing of the blind man, they had only received that first touch, which opened their eyes to a part of the truth. They saw him, but not clearly. They saw his greatness and his glory. But they did not understand the secret of it. They still required the second touch, and this is what our Lord goes on to give in his suffering, death, and resurrection.

Genesis 18:6-33; Psalms 24, 29; Galatians 5:13-25

### **Monday, February 2**

John 6:27-40 *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."* (vv.26-29)

During the French Revolution, when the mobs of Paris were rioting and demonstrating outside the palace of Queen Marie Antoinette, protesting the poverty in which they lived, the queen inquired of her courtiers what the

trouble was. They said to her, “They have no bread.” Marie Antoinette is remembered for her hard-hearted and indifferent reply, “Then let them eat cake.”

In this story in John’s Gospel a crowd of people are saying to Jesus, in effect, “We have no bread,” but the food he proposes instead is very different.

This bread of life is not something to be achieved but is gained by believing in him whom God has sent. Belief in God. Faith. So, in all things and at all times, search your motives in all that you do; are you doing all that you do because of your faith in God? As Mother Teresa said, “God wishes you to grow in your faith.”

Genesis 19:1-29; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Hebrews 11:1-12

### **Tuesday, February 3**

Genesis 21:1-21 *So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child Ishmael, and sent her away.* (v.14a)

Does Ishmael represent something in our life in which we find comfort and delight and which we are reluctant to give up? Perhaps it is some long-standing habit that we have been defending. It can be anything. It may be something causing division and separation. It can be anything which we defend, protect, justify and delight in, just as Abraham defended, protected, and delighted in Ishmael—until the time came when he had to make this choice.

He loved this boy, and he didn’t want to give him up. It was something that would cost him deeply.

I don’t know what form Ishmael may be taking in your life, but I know there are times when God says to us, simply, this must go; no longer may it be permitted.

You know how Abraham obeyed. Early in the morning, he got up and took bread and a skin of water and though it cost him heartbreak to do it, sent Hagar and Ishmael out in obedience to God. Are we also willing to so obey?

Psalms 61, 62; Hebrews 11:13-22; John 6:41-51

### **Wednesday, February 4**

Psalm 72 *Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.* (v.1 NIV)

This prayer of David, probably used at a coronation or induction ceremony, is remarkable to me because of its similarity with inauguration and induction ceremonial prayers used today. How often have we heard these or similar words in the past as Supreme Court Justices, Presidents, and others are sworn into office?

However, saying these words alone does not bestow their meaning on those to whom they’re directed. More is needed. Prayer, commitment, and obedience to God are necessary. It is shallow to think a coating of words will color actions like a coating of paint covers a surface.

We know that this prayer reflected the real desire of David, though even he fell outside its grace. Justice and righteousness—what greater virtues can one demonstrate? Seek justice and display mercy to those in your life as you are inducted into the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:23-31; John 6:52-59

### **Thursday, February 5**

Psalm 71 *My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.* (v.8)

This verse reminds me of when I was a closing speaker at an annual conference of the Victim Offender Mediation Association (VOMA). VOMA is about healing the injuries caused by crime by facilitating face-to-face meetings with victims and their offenders.

Many who attended come from a faith background; many others, however, come to this work for entirely different reasons. Prior to my talk, during prayer, I sensed that I should “fill my mouth with praise” of God, but I wasn’t comfortable with how to do that. I felt that my words of praise would be divisive for many in this crowd and wondered how to praise God, bringing others closer to Him, without shutting anyone down.

Have you recently been in that dilemma? I’m not sure how I did. I do know that I find it so much easier to talk with other Christians and not worry about how I praise God. But, I guess He often calls us out of our comfort zone, doesn’t He? I am reminded of St. Francis of Assisi when he said, “We are called to preach the gospel [and praise God] at all times and, if necessary, use words.”

Genesis 23:1-20; Psalm 70; Hebrews 11:32—12:2; John 6:60-71

### **Friday, February 6**

Psalm 69 *You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you. May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me.* (vv.5-6)

We all know that we can fool other people sometimes; and we all know that we can never fool God anytime. So why do we try? Or why are we so negligent that we fail to heed God’s wishes all the time?

We do fail. If we didn’t, we would only need God’s guidance but not His salvation. And His salvation is what makes us complete in Him!

My great fear, however, is that when I fail, someone else may be noticing and their faith may be impaired by my failure. That is the greatest harm. We all know that we must put our complete trust in God and not in ourselves. We will fail, but God will not. But that doesn’t let us off the hook. Though