

# TRINITY NEWS



## Advent III December 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 Conscience Aflame

As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful -

James 5:7-14

What is the blessing of “showing endurance”? It is sometimes hard to discern!

Job stands in the Wisdom Literature of Israel as a wisdom figure. He is persistent in seeking some meaning in the suffering thrown at him by the loss of his possessions, the destruction of his family and a discomfiting and defacing illness. He has friends who try to comfort him, and they have earned the derogatory term ‘Job’s comforters’ in reflections through history on the book of Job.

The Gospel today speaks of the Baptist’s anguish. He was in a sordid prison, and he didn’t need to be a prophet to know that his death was imminent. His passion was to see fulfilled the “word of the Lord” that had come to him. The core of that word was that he was to announce Messiah’s coming. Now, stuck in prison and with death at hand, he wonders: “Are you the one to come, or should we look for another?” It is a heart-question, a ‘cry from the heart’ to be assured, even though he had spoken so clearly to Jesus and others about his absolute conviction that Jesus was the one who was to come. That is, as the community at Qumran had expected, the prophet of the end time in Deuteronomy who would be like Moses.

We all have piercing moments of uncertainty, especially when our world dissolves under our feet. Will those who come to us be ‘Job’s comforters’? That is, well-meaning but unable to say words that really enter our situation and calm our heaving hearts.

Job and John speak out of pressure situations. Job was crushed, but he clung to his own integrity. He could not be persuaded that what had happened was due to his fault, his own sin before God.

John the Baptist clung to his belief in the perceptions nurtured by the word of the Lord that had come to him. If it was not true he was not true, and a false prophet. John’s messengers returned with assurance about what they had “seen and heard” as a result of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.



What we have “seen and heard” enables us to convey wise and encouraging words to others. That is, if we have learned wisdom from our experiences, and particularly from our mistakes. If we do not both learn and grow from our experiences, then we will only bring stereotyped ‘speeches’ that help no one. I remember June Milne in hospital suffering from cancer in her early forties and with a teenage family saying: “If one more... idiot comes in here and tells me that I will get better soon, I will tell them to go to Hell!” I still remember her. That was 35 years ago. Her husband was broken by her early death, and her children suffered from losing their rock of support. She was wonderful.

The purpose of the Lord according to our text is to bring the Lord’s compassion and mercy to us. I believe in miracles and I pray for them every day. But in the New Testament miracles reflect the purpose, compassion and mercy of God. It would not be a miracle if Rupert Murdoch made several billion more dollars before Christmas. It could be a miracle if he used it to bring many ‘miracles’ of hope to those who come to Christmas with little hope. Said with apologies to Rupert, because not even the world’s richest can fix everything. “To pray is to face self truth”, the Baptist discovered that in prison. Our ‘prison’ is our context. John looked at grimy walls. We look at a grimy and occasionally beautiful world. It is our context. Let those who have eyes to see, see!

+ Arthur Yap

**Next week’s readings:** Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 24; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

**TO PLAN:**

Today.

- Sunday school, 9:15
- Pageant rehearsal after the 9:30 service, Parish Hall

Dec. 14, Tuesday.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Bible Study, 7:15pm (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village)

Dec. 16, Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel

**Your prayers are asked in our healing ministry for**

Diana Croyston, JPeter, Beryl Tanner, Ron Thoburn, Suzanne Jacobson, Cena Quiapos, Ron Jacob, Bonnie SyCip, Fidelia Matthews, Jovel Llagas, Ted Whale, Ena Duhaylongsod, Amy Gonzales, Emerinciana Gatela, Carrie Angus, Augusto Natividad, Avelina Collado, Eric Williamson, Jaqueline Acquiatan, Susan Dalmas, Carlyn-Fern Manning, Richard Kendall, Johnny Manning Jr, Sunny Cabanang, Valerie Jones, Fr. Barry Cumberland, Gloria Domingo, Katsi Araneta, Emilie Nauntofte, Marian Kermanshahchi, Rosaline Soulsby, Divinagracia Benitez, Les Vye-Parminter, Wilson Teh, Rey del Rosario, Jose Songco, Gitte Volk, Cecile Gutierrez.

**BEWARE!**

**If you’re approached by some unknown individuals for money please let the office know. An incident happened last week wherein two girls were caught soliciting money from the 9:30 congregation during coffee hour.**

	<b>Last Sunday</b>	<b>Year-to-date</b>	<b>Proportionate Budget</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>
<b>Pledge</b>	P78,066.68	P3,891,158.48	P3,675,000.00	P3,900,000
<b>Loose Plate</b>	P18,080.00	P802,898.54	P885,769.23	P940,000

The church’s monthly **Sources & Uses** report is available for viewing in the Church Office. Please look for Maricel. For questions, feel free to email Edison at [edisonyap@gmail.com](mailto:edisonyap@gmail.com)