

ADORATION – REFLECTION

Fr. Sean

Read: Psalm 63:2-5 “O God, you are my God— it is you I seek! For you my body yearns; for you my soul thirsts, In a land parched, lifeless, and without water. I look to you in the sanctuary to see your power and glory. For your love is better than life; my lips shall ever praise you! I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands, calling on your name.

Today we are reminded that the God calls us to be mindful of His presence and His grace. However that has been difficult to do, as last year we were at the foot of the cross, God was hidden from our eyes. Fire and destruction gripped our whole community. It was something many of us never expected. Fear, doubt, confusion and isolation.

Therefore how are we supposed to recognize and seek God in our midst as David writes in the Psalms? Well, when David wrote this Psalm, he was much like us, forced to evacuate his home, left in the wilderness of Judah, fleeing for his life. He too was in isolation, left with his doubts and fears. So what did he do, he writes a song of adoration, filled with praise to God.

God was with us in the days of the fires, just like he is with us today. We are his people, the flock he shepherds; God was beside us in those difficult days. He was our support during the smoke and confusion. I remember so many people helping one another, and praying together. He gave us strength to do miraculous and generous things for neighbors and strangers. He walked with us the same way he walked with David so long ago. He listened to our sorrows and hesitations, wiped away our tears, accompanied us when we were alone and inspired us to act quickly and bravely. He showed us that life is about resurrection and hope. God's work, is the work of restoration and Salvation. He makes all things new.

God doesn't take away the pain of life, he allows us to catch a glimpse of salvation, a glimpse of hope. He fortifies us to rebuild and rise. We may live in this world, feeling “parched in drylands” and so we thirst like David... for we exist for the world to come.

And so we praise Him now, for we were privileged to see God glorified in our city during the fires, the incredible outpouring of love and compassion from our friends, neighbors, first responders, and hundreds of volunteers (and their love) from across the country. The fire changed all of us, and every day since, we have been resurrecting, building back our community... hopefully in His image. God is here, we can see him.

Read Psalm again

ADORATION – PERSONAL WITNESS

Greta King

It was approximately 2:00 am on October 7th, one year ago today, when I was awakened by the 70 mph winds beating against my home in Coffey Park. I was startled as I sat up in bed to smell smoke and knew immediately something was wrong. Like most of us, I was in denial that anything catastrophic could or would ever happen in my quiet little town. We all shared the same feelings of shock, disbelief and utter terror that night as we watched this nightmare unfold.

In what seemed like an instant, my husband and I were forced to evacuate our home, like many of you, leaving behind everything we owned and cherished to flee for our lives. Not knowing what would happen to us and the things we left behind. I can remember in those brief moments before leaving my home thinking, “What do I take?” What is really important at that moment? My husband grabbed his computer and I collected our iPads and we ran out our front door to hear people yelling, “Get out of here! The houses down the street are in flames!” I looked down the street and saw a wall of fire coming toward us and the terrifying sound of explosions. I remember this dreadful sinking feeling knowing our church building was at the end of that street engulfed with flames. I assumed it was completely gone. For the next several hours I was frantically calling everyone in the evacuation zone to make sure they were alive and well and in a safe place. I am forever grateful to God that we made it through the fire alive. Somehow, miraculously, both our church building and our home survived the fire, when so many other’s did not. I grieve for their losses and for the loved ones of those who did not survive. Some might ask why would God allow such a tragedy to happen.

This experience has reminded me that God has not promised us a life without trouble but He has promised to be with us in times of trouble. The Psalmist David wrote from his own experience in this passage, “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live .” Tomorrow isn’t promised...just today. God knows at times we will walk through the “valley of the shadow of death”. That is what I felt that night. The shadow of death hung over our city. But our Father has promised to always be with us so we need not fear. I could feel God with us during the fires. I could sense His love and care for us by the incredible

outpouring of compassion and support shown from our friends, neighbors, surrounding churches, the First Responders and hundreds of volunteers from across the country. It was truly inspiring how people came together to help each other. I was so proud to be part of this great community. I learned that fire is devastating but love is indestructible. The fires were great but God's love is greater! And nothing can separate us from God's love. I have been encouraged with the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans the eighth chapter:

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.”

We experienced the powers of hell that raged through Sonoma County this time last year. Yet, here we are today - Sonoma Strong! I praise God for that!

Read Psalm again

**Activity: Praise Song (Band)
Bell Rings**

CONFESSION - REFLECTION

Warren Hays

Read Psalm 103:12-13 "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

" I recently heard it said that, ' to be constantly mindful of God is salvation from worry, fear, and regret.' If anyone had reason to fear, to worry and to regret it was King David. Having failed completely in his relationship with Bathsheba and finding himself guilty of adultery and even murder, he threw himself upon the mercy of The Lord. Having experienced such dynamic and powerful forgiveness affected his expressions and confessions of faith as found throughout the Psalms. He understood forgiveness by being a recipient of such a great gift. When he wrote, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far removed our transgressions from us.' In verse 12, using this figure of speech implies the complete, finished, work of God removing all condemnation, guilt and shame from us so that it may no longer even be considered.

When my home burned, these thoughts came to me; 'why did God allow my home to burn, is He displeased with me, is there something he is saying to me about anything I may be doing to displease Him.' While I knew better, the thoughts were there and I had to deal with them. The confessions I made during this difficult time in my life were of the utmost importance.

Verse 12 states, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him." This verse came alive to me several days following the fire. I was up early one morning as I was unable to sleep and I drove to a local market to get a cup of coffee. As I stepped out of my truck, I sensed the Spirit of The Lord come upon me and literally experienced His grief over my loss. My grief had become His grief and I was amazed at how willing He is to be with us in our weakness. I stood in the middle of that parking lot and just wept for some time. Why wouldn't He feel my grief as the Psalmist expresses Father's compassion on his children.

My fear of The Lord was once fear of His punishment and it was marked by condemnation. Now, as one who has been forgiven, the old fear has turned into a fear described as 'reverence' and that reverence is expressed through worship, gratitude and service.

Read Psalm again

CONFESSION – PERSONAL WITNESS

Billy Andre

When we got the news of losing our house on October 9th My wife and I were in shock. There's no way our house could be gone. We were at the tail end of Coffey park so the fire would have to go through the entire neighborhood to get to our house and unfortunately it did. Since then I've experienced such a wide range of emotions. In some of the deepest moments of my discouragement and heart break I've questioned God's goodness and his mercy in all of this.

My natural reaction to this tragedy we experienced was "this isn't fair" I still can't believe that my kids won't have any of their childhood memories. I cringe at the reality that my wife and I won't be able to sit down when we are older to watch the video tapes of our kids first steps. The home that took 15 years of memories to build was gone in an instant. And since I'm being honest here, I'm tired of well meaning people reminding me that I can replace everything. I'm tired of hearing that the things we lost are just "stuff". Many of those items had a story behind them. Those things were a symbol of our lives. Without those items we can still share the stories but we will forever miss the relic that represents that part of our journey. When I think about the loss my immediate reaction is to tell myself that it doesn't hurt. But I'm worn out from the work it takes to keep in denial. The loss is great and the appropriate reaction to loss is grief. As I enter into that dark corridor of grief I've found myself wrestling with resentment and anger towards God. I've asked the questions to my Heavenly Father such as: Why did my house burn? God, why didn't you shift the winds that night? Why does my family have to suffer? Why do so many in my church and community have to suffer?

And as I ask those questions I've found myself avoiding God. I've become a companion to worry and fear. In my fear I've wondered if God really was going to take care of me my family. There have been other times that my anger has lead me to become short and impatient with those I love the most. I've found myself doubting God's goodness when the confusion was a thick fog that I couldn't see past. I've even swam the dark waters of self-pity that have left me depressed. I've made mistakes and let my hope fail.

Maybe you're here today and you've made mistakes. And you've let your hope fail and in those moments you've found yourself compromising your values. Perhaps you've felt angry with God over the destruction of your community as we remember this tragic day that seems so unfair. As we confess our imperfections before a Holy God we have to remember that there is hope. The hope we experience today comes at the expense of another tragic and unfair event that happened over 2,000 years ago when the sinless son of God who came to this earth to demonstrate God's love, was sacrificed on a cross to pay the price for our sin. His sacrifice gives us assurance. So the next time that you feel a wave of guilt or shame over the mistakes that you've made this past year just remember the beautiful picture of the forgiveness that we experience in Jesus Christ found in Psalm 103....

Read Psalm again

Activity: Audience guided reflection (Steve P.)

Bell Rings

THANKSGIVING - REFLECTION

Carlos Perdomo

Read Psalm 28:6-7 “Blessed be the LORD, who has heard the sound of my pleading. The LORD is my strength and my shield, in whom my heart trusts. I am helped, so my heart rejoices; with my song I praise him.

Lord we come before you today with a humble heart.

Jesus, as citizens of Sonoma County, we are here to reflect a sad event that happened a year ago in our cities.

It is impossible to deny the material losses, but the most painful are the losses of the loved ones who are no longer with us. Many times, we have felt alone, disoriented and without strength. However, your word is comfort to our suffering which brings us encouragement.

David said in Psalm 28:6 “Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy”.

Lord we trust and believe in you! God, we know that you are in the business of building. Lord we know that we need to rebuild our cities but help us first by rebuilding our hearts! Our hearts were broken, our hearts were hurt, we were in distress, so help us by removing any resentments, hate, and doubt inside of us.

this is very difficult to process and sometimes it may seem impossible; but David continued to help us understand in

Psalm 28: 7 “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me”.

Lord you are the best builder humankind has ever known. Lord you created us in your own image. As we wait to see the outcome, we are so excited to see the new blueprints that you have for our hearts and our cities.

Lord we know that this process may seem that it’s going very slow, so we pray today for patience, love and understanding. Help us to be part of the solution and not the problem.

Lord, we bring our city officials, first responders, firemen, Emt’s, doctors, nurses’ workers, and anyone that has been involved in this tragedy. The task that they are facing is a difficult one. It will need lots of patience, as many of them were also impacted by the fires.

In conclusion:

We want to thank you for holding us together. Together with your help, Sonoma will rise again, and it will be beautiful as it has always been. We pray all this in Jesus name. Amen.

My daughter sent me this quote: I want to leave you with it:

"FAITH is like Wi-Fi, it's invisible but it has the power to connect you to what you need".

Read Psalm again

THANKSGIVING – PERSONAL WITNESS

Jon & Rachael Maves

October 22, 2017, Yesterday Jon and I went back to see our house. My only expectation was closure. It was my first time visiting the area, the magnitude of devastation was breath taking. We donned our suits, masks, and gloves, and began to make our way through the ash. Ash. I'd like to use another word, rubble, remains, remnants, but other than a few items of twisted metal, nothing else existed. Ash, yes, ash. Immediately I went to where my bookcase once stood. Since I was a child, books have been my escape, something so dear to my heart they were carried with me since childhood from house to house, college to college, and into my adult life. They were the first things we unpacked in our home every time we moved. For me, my books are what made home my home. It was where I showed up, a physical manifestation of my presence in our house. As I looked at the remains I could see faint shadows of the pages. Stunning that the fire would leave such well-defined ash. I went to pick one up and it crumbled in my hands, nothing more than powder. I looked at Jon and wondered what we were doing here sifting. There was nothing left. We made our way further toward the back of the house and there, lying on top of the ash was the sign I bought for my new office: "You got this". You got this. Over the last few years, in times of unbelievable stress and anxiety, you got this had become our intimate words of encouragement. Sometimes Jon would shout it from the door as I pulled out of the driveway, his fist raised in triumph. Sometimes he would whisper it in my ear as I slumped against him exhausted and broken. Today. Today it was left atop the ashes of our lives, a gentle reminder again, this time spoken in the still small voice of the Father, "you got this"

Over the course of this year, we are thankful for all the ways in which He has reminded us that He is with us, that we are not alone, that in all things He is working for our good. In this time of reflection, are there times you have seen His provision? His steady hand? Things for which you abundantly thankful? Let us give him thanks.

Read Psalm again

Activity: Audience guided reflection (Jon M.)

Friends, as we share our stories today, as we remember the day that will forever be intertwined in the tapestry of our lives, may we share our word of encouragement? You got this, because He has you.

Introduce Kelly Slater (Jon M.)

1st responders “Bells of Gratitude”

Kelly Slater

Introduction of how/why we will honor 1st responders.

Invitation of dept reps to stage

Read each name. Adam/Stephen hand bell

Invite all 1st responders present to stand (pause for audience applause)

Pray over all 1st responders

Bell Rings

SUPPLICATION - REFLECTION

Fr. Oscar

Psalm 86:1-3 "Incline your ear, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and oppressed. Preserve my life, for I am devoted; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; be gracious to me, Lord; to you I call all the day"

We come to the Lord because we know He is always paying attention to our supplications, our needs and wants, sometimes we think that God is not listening to us, but we can be sure that He is always on our side, God is good and He loves us all.

Psalm 86 is a prayer for help. Think about our own life experiences or situations where we long to connect to God or where our life circumstances bring us to our knees.

I love the Psalms and turn to them often in prayer because they touch all our human emotions. Like the Psalmist, haven't we cried to God in our difficulties and struggles and asked God to bend an ear and answer our prayers?

Franciscan Priest and author Richard Rohr says:

"The path of prayer and love and the path of suffering seem to be the two Great Paths of transformation. Suffering seems to get our attention; love and prayer seem to get our heart and our passion." "True prayer, is usually experienced as tears, surrender or forgiveness." Certainly the psalmist is suffering as he is crying out to God all day and I think many of us can identify with this at times. Or as we have heard said: "I have been there", but certainly we can say that God has been our refuge and our strength.

Could our life journeys which lead us to face our core realities also lead us to our truest self and to God in prayer? We can come to know God in our brokenness as the psalmist says in another prayer: "God is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" and in spite of our weaknesses, brokenness, and sinfulness, God is always loving, forgiving and compassionate. God is Love!

In the midst of his suffering, the Psalmist mentions devotion to and trust in God. I find that trusting in my prayer life is easier if I let go and let God be God -- trusting in God's mercy and grace rather than expecting a certain outcome. It is so hard for us human beings to let go of what we think we can control, and surrender trusting God with the outcome. Because at the end God will be in charge and He

will always will provide for us, may the Lord as the psalm reads 'be gracious to us all'.

Read Psalm again

SUPPLICATION – PERSONAL WITNESS

Dino K.

I am a senior at Cardinal Newman high school and one of the first people to witness the devastation to our campus... a place we students call home in many respects. When I was asked to speak I immediately said yes because God is very important to me and He has always played an important role in my life, through the best and worst times.

I was blessed to be raised with the understanding that God is always there for me, always watching. Therefore, prayer is one of the most important things in my life, it is one thing that I know I can always rely on to connect with our Creator. I pray for multiple reason, for example I prayed in the past to God for my mother. I lost my mom to cancer 4 months after the fires. To watch our community, people and places I loved, be devastated by the fires, and then have my mom pass away was extremely difficult. Geez, did I pray through that.

Sometimes I was mad, sometimes I was sad, sometimes I was confused, but then one day my prayer felt different... I was filled with peace and at THAT moment I knew God had heard my prayers, and my mom was with him in Heaven.

I know that through our best and worst times God wants to hear from us, so here are some prayers I created for our community:

Lord, give us your strength and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us remember and lift up those most in need from what happened one year ago. Through your strength and glory, we can overcome anything.

Lord, we pray for those in our community that lost their homes in the fires. Give them your strength to rebuild and continue moving forward, surround them with help and support.

Lord, we pray for those that lost not only their homes but their loved ones from the fire. Give them joy in their suffering, knowing that their loved ones are lifted up towards you and at peace. Let us always remember those that we lost due to the Tubbs Fire.

Lord, we pray for our community, guide us in the way that your son guided his followers, help us find peace in our tragedy. Come to our aid so that we find joy in you, as we remember the significantly daunting memories that have come from the fires.

Finally Lord, we pray that you bestow upon us the virtue of Hope, that we move forward together as a Christian community, rebuilding together.

Amen.

Read Psalm again

Activity: Audience guided reflection (Adam & Stephen)

Prayer Wells Prayer Share

Bell Rings

Announcement:

Adam & Stephen

Thank you again for coming, stick around for song and praise or enjoy the fellowship area... or do both. Again, any donation would be helpful. We'd now like to welcome Bishop Vasa and Deacon Gary Moore to conclude for us.

Our Father & Sign of Peace

Bishop Vasa / Dec. Gary

In many of our churches, services and masses, after the Lord's prayer, we traditionally offer each other a sign of peace. This action expresses a sense of community, our unity of faith in God, our support of each other, strengthens our resolve that all who suffer are not forgotten and that we are all Together in Hope.

The sign of peace can be a smile, a nod, a handshake, or even a hug, anything that helps you connect with your neighbor.

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who said to Your Apostles: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you," regard not our sins but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity, in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

May the peace of God be with you always.

Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

Song & Praise

Community Baptist Choir

Together in Hope Band (Steve P. & Eli C.)