

Fifth Sun Lent C
Making All Things New

Introduction...

In Mel Gibson's film **Passion of the Christ** there is a touching scene of Christ's carrying the Cross thru the narrow streets of Jerusalem, where the wounded, bleeding, struggling Jesus passes by his mother who is trying to reach out to him... Jesus says to his crying mother... "I make all things new." Gibson's film has caused some controversy, and its depiction of bloodshed is probably overdone... but it is a powerful statement of what Jesus went thru to accomplish his mission....

That powerful statement to his weeping mother, "I make all things new", while not found in the Gospels, is a powerful summary of what Jesus' mission entailed.... Jesus has come to make all things new... beginning now in this world, and ending in the new heavens and the new earth that John's Book of Revelation, chapter 21, promises. And so we can sing...

Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, have mercy on us.

I Scripture Readings...

Today's Scripture Readings refer to this new life that Jesus brings... In the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, we read:

*Thus says the Lord... see, I am doing something new.
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers...*

*for I put water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland
for my chosen people to drink,
the people whom I formed myself,
that they might announce my praise.*

Such was the promise of God, the promise that Jesus came to proclaim. But God's people would not listen – how hard it is to listen to God and do God's will. That's why we sing...

Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord...

In the Gospel we see Jesus at work, doing God's will...
Bringing water to the desert of sinfulness and rejection,
Bringing the rivers of his Father's grace
into the wasteland of hard and unforgiving hearts.
We see Jesus making a sinful woman new –
not condemning her,
but forgiving her and encouraging her to "sin no more" -
to experience the newness of God's kingdom,
of God's mercy.

The God we heard about in last week's Gospel,
in the story that Jesus told about the Prodigal Father
who rejoices in his sinful son's return
and welcomes him into his home once again...
Here we see Jesus doing what he said the Prodigal Father did....
Jesus begins the process of making this sinful woman anew.

Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord....

II What About Us?

The next question is... so what?

What does this mean to us?

Are you and I part of Jesus' "making all things new?" How?

We are a special part of God's Kingdom...

By our Baptism we have been brought close into God's household,

we have become vital parts of God's Kingdom –

God's plan to *make all things new*.

Sin has disrupted the flourishing of God's plan...

from the beginning.

Sin continues to disrupt this flourishing of God's plan

even to this day.

Jesus has conquered sin by his suffering and death –

but the working out of that victory takes place in our world even to this

day...

and in our lives even to this day.

Sinfulness struggles with grace,

the destructive powers of sin corrupt our flourishing,

and lay waste our world.

But Jesus wants to heal a broken world,

to make all things new.

We see it in today's beautiful and hope-filled Gospel story.

I've seen it many times in my ministry over the past 30 years.

I've seen men and women who at times seemed to be caught up in so many

worries and fears,

struggling marriages,
anxiety about teenage or young adult children or grandchildren,
too much anger or too many resentments...

I've been privileged to speak with men and women who desire to grow
spiritually and to develop their prayer life...
to walk more closely with the Lord...
they have become aware of the spiritual shallowness of our culture...
of the self-centeredness and self pampering and consumerism we are all
exposed to 24/7.
They have become aware of what Pope Francis calls the globalization of
superficiality.

I have seen God touch so many men and women who come on retreat
weekends with graciousness and mercy and healing.
I have seen people grow spiritually,
and become more aware of God's presence in their daily lives.
They grow more able to deal with the challenges and roadblocks that life
throws into their journey...
learning to trust God,
deepen their own spiritual life,
try to be more understanding and patient with others,
and realize that we can't always have it our way...
even when we think it is the best way.

Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord, ...

What about you and me?

What needs to be made new in our lives?

As we prepare for Easter and for our recommitting ourselves to our
Baptismal vows...

what's keeping us from being the people God wants us to be?

Do worries and fears play too much a part of our daily lives?

What about anger and resentments, or jealousy?

What about too much... too much shopping, internet, TV?

What about too much running around and restlessness,
with very little quality time given to family, friendships, and even our
spiritual lives?

Do we devote too little time if any time to daily prayer or spiritual reading or
reading our Sacred Books... our Scriptures.

If you say that you have a hard time understanding our Scriptures, I suggest
you go to Amazon.com,

search for Children's bibles with pictures – and buy a copy...

this helps us bring back to memory God's gracious dealings with God's
people... the simple Bible stories tells us about our God and remind us how
God loves each of us... and wants to make us new.

Do you have any favorite spiritual authors?

When was the last time you read them,

or any of the lives of the saints...

our Catholic heroes and heroines who challenge us to trust God and live our
lives as God's sons and daughters?

What might we take to Jesus this day to touch and heal and *make new*?

Refrain... Have Mercy O Lord,

Conclusion...

As we continue with this Eucharist, let us ask God's mercy upon ourselves.

Ask Jesus to help us to grow spiritually...

As we receive Jesus' very Body and Blood today,
we ask Jesus to let the waters of his mercy and healing flow into our lives,
refresh us, and make us anew... Amen.