

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Mar 16th 2016

There weren't any angels with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they boldly stood up to King Nebuchadnezzar. They still weren't present when those men walked into the furnace. They had no visual evidence of their safety, nor of God's willingness to dramatically save them. And yet, they trusted.

Just as God showed up to assist them in their time of trouble, He does the same for us. Thankfully most of us won't be asked to choose between a false idol and a hot furnace, but we definitely will face the choice between standing up for our faith or laughing at an unholy joke. How about lustily satisfying our sexual urges versus trusting God's plan for the gift of our sexuality? Perhaps a choice between making more money or keeping the Sabbath day a holy day of rest? Our lives are besieged with choices that pit the secularity of our worldly society against our universal call to holiness. Do we trust God leading our lives?

Including the planning my fiancé and I are doing for our wedding and more importantly preparing for marriage, finishing internal medicine residency this summer, moving back to Wisconsin, and starting work as a full-time physician this fall, 2016 will go down as one of the most eventful years of my life. With these changes come challenges and choices. With each step, there inevitably comes a time when I must choose between what is easier/gives me more gratification and on the other hand what is holier and Godlier. For example, it would be financially easier and certainly gratify me more to live with my fiancé for the month that we live in Wisconsin before our wedding. But that's not what God calls us to. The choice to live separately until we are wed is clearly what God and the Church ask of us and we will trust in His plan for our housing and finances.

Trust is a central theme of Lent. We deny ourselves and trust that God will provide. We sorrowfully walk the Via Dolorosa with Jesus while we hopefully await Easter Sunday. We walk into the Confessional to celebrate Reconciliation with confidence in God's mercy and forgiveness. Each of these is a way in which we trust in God's promise of mercy and love.

We have a little over one week of Lent remaining. During this Holy Week let's together instill our trust in the Lord. A friend told me that she "failed out of Lent" a couple weeks into it this year. Albeit a silly idea, it's one many of us believe to some degree. But Lent is not a test to pass or fail. So as one Church let's rededicate our focus on preparing ourselves with the trust that God will transform our sinful hearts during this Easter preparation.

