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RELIGIOUS



BULLETIN

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God Will Decide

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Flannery O'Connor once wrote a humorous but haunting short story entitled "Revelation". It conjures up the life of a respectable, hard-working, middle-class Christian lady named Ruby Turpin. Mrs. Turpin played life by the rules. She went to church every Sunday. She took pains to help everyone she met who was in need. With the zeal of a crusader, she waged war on dirt and disorder. She worked tirelessly for the church and drew assurance from the notion that God would one day reward her for her efforts. Every night she thanked Jesus that she wasn't like the menagerie of poor slobs who turned up all around her: the lazy, the jobless, drunkards, the disheveled and the destitute.

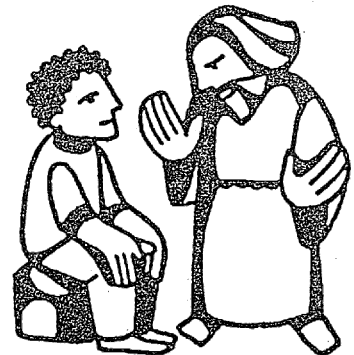




One day, while working in her yard, Mrs. Turpin was struck by a vision of the Judgement Day. She watched incredulously as a long arched highway reached out across the sky. "Upon it a vast horde of souls were rumb-ling toward heaven." But Mrs. Turpin and her friends were not at the head of this celestial parade. Instead, "there were whole companies of white-trash, clean for the first time in their lives, and bands of blacks in white robes, and battalions of freaks and lunatics shouting and clapping and leaping like frogs." Mrs. Turpin noticed with dismay that, at the rear of this bizarre procession was "a tribe of people like herself, people who had a little of every-thing and the God-given wit to use it right. They were marching behind the others, accountable as they had always been for good

order and common sense and res-pectable behavior. They alone were on key. Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues had been burned away."

Like the vision that startled Mrs. Turpin, this Sunday's Gospel reminds us that no one can pre-sume to be more justified in God's eyes than anyone else. "The eighteen people who were killed when the tower fell on them at Siloam," says Jesus, "do you imagine they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? I tell you they were not; but unless you repent, you will all come to the same end." The Gospel suggests our status, our good works, our diligence, our right-eousness, our charity, or even our Christianity. It insists that God alone will decide who is first and last in the proces-sion towards His Kingdom.



The season of Lent invites each of us to abandon all trust in our own righteousness and instead to repent and to trust in God's mercy. Lent reminds us that only the power of God's love can save us when we one day discover, like Mrs. Turpin, that even our virtues have been burned away. As a Tennessee preacher once put it, with delightful earthiness: "Black, white, Ku Klux Klanner, preacher, banker, murderer, chairman of General Motors, or head of the Ford Foundation--we are all bastards, but God loves us anyway."



But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey."

Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15



Pride

READINGS FROM C. S. LEWIS

ACCORDING TO Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.

The Christians are right: it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But Pride always means enmity—it *is* enmity. And not only enmity between man and man but enmity to God.

In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that—and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison—you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.




STATIONS
OF THE
CROSS

FRIDAYS OF LENT

7:15 p.m.

Sacred Heart Church
Notre Dame



For the Needy

Grant, Lord, that I may gladly share
what I have with the needy,
humbly ask for what I need from him who
has,
sincerely admit the evil I have done,
calmly bear the evil I suffer,
not envy my neighbor for his blessings,
and thank you unceasingly
whenever you hear my prayer.

St. Thomas Aquinas
