

In planning my homily for this week, my heart kept slipping into prayer. . . and so instead of fighting this very good thing – I decided God must want me to offer a prayer as the homily this week – and so I will.

So perhaps just close your eyes, and enter into the quiet temple of your heart – which hopefully we are continuing to cleanse, so God has plenty of room to come into it. And please join my prayers with yours as we surrender ourselves to God.

And good prayer for me, always involves just a little singing. . . And so I begin in song – as I ended in speech last week.

*We remember. We celebrate. We believe.*

God of the covenant, we remember that we are dust and unto dust we shall return.

We remember that we don't do anything to earn your love – that salvation is your free gift to us – even IF we add infidelity to infidelity – even IF we are dead in our transgressions – even IF a mother could forget her child --- You, God, still love us.

Yes, God, we remember how you did not hold anything back from us – not even your own son – and so help us hold nothing back from you.

And so we have to make room for you in our hearts and lives – so set us free from all those very human things which get in the way of us following you with all our minds and all our hearts – many of which we named last week:

Set us free from our selfishness.

Set us free from our complacency.

Set us free from our fear.

Set us free from our way of looking at things and our way of doing things.

Set us free from the distractions and the false values that the world is constantly bombarding us with.

Set us free from our petty concerns and our lack of faith.

Set us free from the many walls we build against your goodness: the barriers we erect to letting your grace flow freely into our hearts and lives, our minds and spirits. . .

We REMEMBER how you set the Israelites free from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and ask the same of you now.

And even though very few of us like change, because we find it so difficult, we REMEMBER that all things are possible with your grace – and so we ask you to help us take those first steps toward you in faith.

Help us grow in our fidelity to your law written on our hearts: so that we can be as faithful to you as you are to us.

Help us to be obedient to your word – which means that we will listen to it – take it in, and allow it to transform our lives.

Fill our hearts with gratitude for your great love that held nothing back from us –not even your own son: who came so that we might have life – and have it to the full.

Help us to live as Jesus did – to be like grains of wheat which fall to the ground and die – so that we can produce much fruit – not for our own benefit – but in service to your kingdom – reaching out

especially to our brothers and sisters who are the most vulnerable and in need of mercy, care, and comfort.

Help us to bear fruit that gives glory to your name.

And in the Holy days of Triduum which are fast approaching – help us to faithfully follow your son --- into Jerusalem, all the way to the cross, so as to die to sin and rise to new life.

Yes, Lord, *We remember, we celebrate, we believe.* And so it is with conviction we say “so be it” as we pray: AMEN!