



ST. PATRICK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

4797 Curtis Blvd, Port St. John FL 32927

January 28, 2024

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son
and of The Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The passage selected for today is taken from the Book of Isaiah:

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

You will notice that the Green of Epiphany season was short lived. Today we make the transition into the Pre-Lenten season celebrating Septuagesima Sunday or 70 days before Easter. The transition from Epiphany to Lent is not abrupt. We have 3 weeks before we come to the solemn penitence of Ash Wednesday to prepare. The readings for this Sunday are perfectly appointed for the transition. In the Gospel, we have the immeasurable and ineffable kindness extended by Jesus Christ to include the Gentiles in the plan of Salvation. The Epistle, by St. Paul, who was the chosen vessel by God to preach that salvation to the Gentiles helps us move from joy at the announcement to an

understanding the way we are called to live our lives.

We know this Gospel all too well. This is the Gospel of “It’s not fair!!!” We hear it preached in our house every day. There is no more finely tuned measuring instrument than a child’s eye. A micron of difference in portions of a dessert sets the instrument’s alarm wailing, “Her piece is bigger than mine. It is his turn to take out the trash. Tristyn gets away with everything.”

Of course, to be honest, it is not just the kids that set it off. If I listen carefully, I hear another voice saying, “I worked all day, why do I have to do the dishes. Why did those guys get the contract. They must have paid somebody off. Why do I have to be the one to set the good example.” The truth is this is the Gospel reserved for all of us who are seduced by the green tinged demon of envy.

I’m in good company. Adam and Eve thought they should be like God. Cain envied God’s acceptance of Abel’s sacrifice. Joseph journey into bondage in Egypt was powered by

the envy of his brothers. David, envied his captain's wife. The other 10 Apostles thought the efforts of John and James' mother to secure spots on the right and left hand of Jesus were "Not Fair!" The Jewish followers of Jesus thought the Gentiles brought through Paul had to be circumcised.

Envy is the way of Man. It is present between churches, within parishes, in our vocations, in our diversions, between spouses and within families.

How different the way of God is. With the right to all honor and glory, he humbled Himself to share our Nature. As the source of eternal life, He shares our death. Spotless and without sin, Jesus makes His sacrifice the propitiation for our sins. Sufficient in love within the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, they share that love with us, who deserve it not at all. We resent, deny, betray and envy the grace of God and how He distributes it to His creatures, our brothers and sisters.

With this understanding from the Gospel comes the poignancy of St. Paul's exhortation in today's Epistle. We should be preparing ourselves to receive the grace Jesus Christ bestows. We should be in training to

make our lives more Godly as seriously as the athlete striving to earn an earthly award.

We cannot earn the grace of salvation, but we can strive to cease our wallowing in envy and self pity. We can train to be more holy. We can pray for greater grace in our dealings with our brothers. We can show our appreciation by making our ways more like God's ways.

Lent will be that time of intense training in our effort to please the Lord, our God, who has been so gracious and so generous with us, who cannot begin to earn the grace we dare to envy.

Life is not fair. Life is not always easy. Life is often back breaking and heart breaking. Yet none of us have been called to the sword to witness our faith. None of us are left to the proper consequence of our sinfulness and enviousness and unkindness. None of us can be the innocent Lamb that pays the price for our sins. Life is not fair. Thank God that He does not call us to our version of His justice. Let's prepare to spend the next 3 weeks building our imitation of His ways and abandoning our own.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen