



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

Homily for Fourth Week of Lent – March 16, 2026

Barbara Stanbridge, IHM

Isaiah: 17-21 | John 4:43-54

The reading from Isaiah set in the context of our current world I find deeply disturbing and at the same time hopeful of a time to come, a time we had hoped would have arrived by now but one which we can not lose sight of a vision of what can be...a time of peace for all Jerusalem and all peoples.

John's Gospel is set in Galilee right after the story of the woman at the well. A story that we explored in our Lenten retreat with Fr. Gilbert and I imagine we are still exploring ...what it is we thirst for.....This story in John shows Jesus once again in conversation with a someone who is set apart, from the larger community surrounding Jesus, a "royal official" ...a Gentile and once again we have a conversation , an engagement between Jesus and the Royal Official, a some one who is a representative figure, who comes to Jesus with a request that is most personal and critical, the life of his son, a precious child, perhaps a favorite child, a heir. We have no details but we can easily imagine the man's plight. The royal official does not debate Jesus like the scribes and Pharisees but simple states the truth that if Jesus does not come his son will die. Jesus responds to the official's anxious plea, the official believes what Jesus says and takes his leave as Jesus instructs. Before he reaches home he receives word that his son has recovered. And upon further inquiry the royal official realizes that the son's recovery took place at the exact moment Jesus said "your son shall live".

John concludes this segment by telling us the official and his whole household came to believe.

We know that John's Gospel, Sandra Schneiders says, is written that we may believe...and today's segment is a call to belief in Jesus as exemplified by the

royal official, who represents us...the verb used by John "to believe" is really about much more than intellectual understanding it is about entering into Jesus becoming one with him. Not an intellectual assent as much as it is active engagement in discipleship.

As I have thought about this I think it brings us to ask ourselves, at least it brings me to ask, what do we believe today in our post- truth world?

What do we believe in a world that bombards us with untruth 24 hours a day?

What do we believe for our community as we prepare once again for an assembly in a new governance plan? What is the truth we are called to face?

What is the cost of discipleship today for us ? What is the dying ...the fever...that needs to be cured? What is it we are being challenged to believe?