



Lenten

Reflections

The Divine Intervention

April 5, 2017

Scripture

Daniel 3: 14-20

King Nebuchadnezzar said:

"Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
that you will not serve my god,
or worship the golden statue that I set up?

Be ready now to fall down and worship the statue I had made,
whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet,
flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe,
and all the other musical instruments;

otherwise, you shall be instantly cast into the white-hot furnace;
and who is the God who can deliver you out of my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar,

"There is no need for us to defend ourselves before you
in this matter.

If our God, whom we serve,
can save us from the white-hot furnace
and from your hands, O king, may he save us!

But even if he will not, know, O king,
that we will not serve your god
or worship the golden statue that you set up."

King Nebuchadnezzar's face became livid with utter rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than usual and had some of the strongest men in his army bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them into the white-hot furnace. Nebuchadnezzar rose in haste and asked his nobles, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" "Assuredly, O king," they answered. "But," he replied, "I see four men unfettered and unhurt, walking in the fire, and the fourth looks like a son of God." Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel to deliver the servants who trusted in him; they disobeyed the royal command and yielded their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."

Our Scripture Reflection

The king was furious with the faithful young men of Israel. Why? Rather than break the great commandment and commit the sin of idolatry by worshipping a pagan god, they chose to remain faithful to their God even if it meant death. They were loyal to God and God was compassionate towards them. Ironically, the king was so moved by their witness that he ended up praising God!

Food for your Journey

Joyce Rupp, OSM, in *Praying Our Goodbyes* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1988), wrote about what she called "creative suffering."

"Suffering in itself has no value," she said. "It is what we do with our suffering that makes the difference. Suffering can be beneficial when it leads to some kind of 'resurrection' in us, when a strength or a sleeping energy in us is aroused, when talents heretofore unknown are recognized, when a clarity about life's purpose and direction becomes keener for us, when a

stronger sense of compassion for others deepens in us. There is so much within us that needs to come to life. Moments of suffering, times of goodbye can cause us to peer inside our own tombs of unfinishedness or incompleteness and we can discover vast storehouses of resiliency, vitality, fidelity, love and endurance.”

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, In a world where true faith is continuously challenged, please keep me loyal to You despite the cost. Amen.