

- Lots of us have been privileged to visit the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. In that place there is displayed on one wall the Gettysburg Address, and on another wall there is displayed Lincoln's second Inaugural address. In that address Lincoln quotes a passage of the gospel that is taken from the passage of the gospel we heard proclaimed today.
- Lincoln references his anxiety over the civil war. He references those agents in their society whose sole purpose was to destroy the Union. He expresses his concerns over those who desired war and those who tried to protect us from war. Lincoln said that everybody was surprised at the duration and the magnitude of the war that unfolded. Everyone on both sides looked for triumph. Everyone on both sides read their bible. They prayed to the same God. Lincoln reminds us that the prayers of both sides cannot be answered.
- He said that the Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses do come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes." That passage comes in the verses just before today's gospel reading. Every president at his inaugural address calls for the nation to be united. Let everyone be a servant to the cause. Let everyone serve the common good.
- In the spirit of today's gospel reading we all have a responsibility to guard the peace of our world. There are those who set out to destroy our peace. We as a nation, we as a Christian community have a collective responsibility to guard the peace. There are those who sin against us. We are not to be contented about that. By ourselves first, then, with the help of our community, then with the help of our Church we are called to make peace, to end the fighting, to become reconcilers. Dictionary.com defines reconciliation as the act of reconciling, as when former enemies agree to an amicable truce.
- To defend the peace, to act justly, is a Biblical truth. Way back and long ago God spoke to Ezekiel. "You, I have appointed watchman for the House of Israel." God warns Ezekiel if the wicked carry on with their wicked ways and you do not say anything, I will hold you responsible. Paul says it in the opposite way. "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another."
- Lots of us stand on the sideline and we wait for the reconcilers to step up to the plate. I position myself well hidden in the crowd. I join in the cheer but I do not dare say anything. As much as I hate it I will allow the wicked people of this world to enjoy their wicked dance. I have no problem with those who attack the migrant and the refugee because I never said anything. I am happy for Mr. Kim to fire his rockets because I never said anything. I am happy for the radicals to parade on our streets because I never said anything.

- Jesus said: “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. Lincoln honored those at Gettysburg by saying, “It is for us the living to be dedicated to the unfinished work which those who fought have thus far so nobly advanced. We are to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us. We resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”
- Lincoln also said this at his second inaugural address: “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.” And we say, Amen. Amen. Amen.