

Lamentation Reversed Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time Monday, July 23, 2018
8:15 AM **Mi 6:1-4, 6-8;** Mt 12:38-42 (St. Bridget, religious) (The point is that God is asking for some kind of a response from the people just they were always asking a response from him.)

“For the Lord has a plea against his people, and he enters into trial with Israel.”

This is from the scroll of Micah. It’s important that we read the prophets because in many ways, although **Jesus** did not style himself as a prophet, **much of his teaching related to what the prophets had already said**, in particular his teaching on **the importance or lack of importance of temple sacrifices**. Here, through the words of the prophet, God is turning everything around. The Jewish people had, the Hebrew people had, as one of their most well used motifs **the motif of lamentation**. Many of the psalms are lamentations. They are deep and heartfelt complaints concerning personal misfortune, national tragedies, natural catastrophes, or just the unfortunate reversals of history. **The basic theme is “God, why aren’t you helping us more? God, don’t you know what we are suffering?” and that type of thing.**

Well now through Micah **God** is turning the tables on his people. He **is doing the lamenting**. So this is actually in the form of a lament. “Oh my people, what have I done to you?” And the point is that **God is asking for some kind of a response from the people, just as they were always asking a response from him.**

Now there is this sort of response: “Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? With what shall I come before the Lord? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriad streams of oil?” Even this extreme oft condemned idea: “Shall I give my first-born for my crime?” suggesting that, well, maybe God will be pleased with the offering of a child. That’s what that means. But the point that of course the prophet is making is that no, **none of this is pleasing to God**. This is what Jesus himself echoed, especially when he went to the Temple and pushed out the pigeons and the turtledoves and the bullocks and the goats, and said, “My Father’s house is to be a house of prayer.” In other words, God isn’t looking for sacrifices. God doesn’t want offerings. **What does God want? “You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only”—only—“to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.”**