



Come and See!

Week of October 27, 2024

The Word...

“As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.” And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, “Son of David, have pity on me.” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you” (Mk 10:46-52).

Pondering the Word...

There are many legends about St. Brigid of Kildare involving beggars and cows. (She is the patron saint of dairy farmers!) One tells of her walking down the road with a cow when she encounters a beggar who asks for alms. She offers him the cow instead. He refuses. He tells her he doesn't want the responsibility of owning a cow. His life has been all about begging for his keep, and that's what he's used to. He has neither the courage nor the motivation to change his lot.

In the story of Bartimaeus, we hear he cries out loudly to Jesus despite the reprimands of the community. When Jesus responds, his chiding neighbors change their tune and tell him to “take courage.” Why do they say that? He seems more than eager to engage Jesus! Why would he need courage? Because change is hard.

While we may cry out to God for mercy and pity, accepting the work that healing requires of us does, in fact, take courage and trust. Sometimes, it may just seem easier to keep ourselves hidden in the cloak of shame, addiction, or depression in which we are wrapped.

Living the Word...

Two points to consider:

If you've ever gotten frustrated working with someone in need who doesn't seem to want or to be able to change their lot, or who makes the same bad choices over and over, consider their starting point. We all know it can be difficult to change our ways of thinking and doing. Habits are hard to break, and new habits are hard to make. Yes, making changes—even for those of us blessed with strong safety nets and support—takes courage. Be compassionate. Look at situations from the point of view of those we support to help them take small steps toward healing.

And, if you are one in need of help, take courage. Don't be afraid to approach Jesus and ask him to lead you to his presence alive in others who can help: family members, friends, counselors, doctors, and ministers. Find a supportive community that accepts you as you are right now, one that will give you the courage to heal.

Personal Reflections and Ideas: _____

Mon, Oct 28: *Jesus went up to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles' (Lk 6:12-16).* Let's consider some of the guys Jesus chooses after spending a night discerning this major decision: Simon Peter, whose bravado gets him into hot water, and who denies Jesus three times when Jesus needs him the most. James and John, "the sons of thunder," concerned about where they will sit in God's Kingdom. Thomas, always the skeptic. And, of course, "Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor." Hmmh. It begs the question: Did the discernment signals between God and Jesus get crossed up? **Provision: Trust the Spirit's guidance.** The Spirit led Jesus to choose ordinary human beings: flawed, hard-headed, doubters, sinners, so that all of us who come after them can know we are chosen too, with all our faults and doubt. Sound, Spirit-led discernment takes lots of prayer and courage. Each day, make a fervent prayer to the Spirit to continue to guide you on your way, particularly when any short-term results don't appear to be working out you expected!!

Tue, Oct 29: *"To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened. (Lk 13:18-21. "Do not think that love... has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired. How does a lamp burn? Through the continuous input of small drops of oil... What are these drops of oil in our lamps? They are the small things of daily life: Faithfulness, punctuality, small words of kindness, a thought for others, our way of being silent, of looking, of speaking, and of acting. These are the true drops of love... Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies" (St. Teresa of Calcutta).* **Provision: Do small things with love, for love today.**

Wed, Oct 30: *"Slaves, be obedient to your human masters with fear and trembling" (Eph 6:1-9). "Um...Paul...how does this passage (and some of your words yesterday) square with what you wrote to the Galatians 3:28: 'There can be neither Judaeon nor Greek, neither slave nor freeman, neither male and female, for you are all one in the Anointed One Jesus.'* I know you were drawing parallels with the mystery of Christ and the church and were speaking to people two thousand years ago when women, children, and slaves didn't count for much. What would you say to us today? **Provision: Respect everyone.** In Ignatian Spirituality, there is something named, "The Plus Sign." Ignatius' advice is to assume good intentions on the part of the person with whom you are interacting. In other words, don't judge someone based on externals or labels. Let's try this today.

Thu, Oct 31: *"Put on the armor of God...clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the Gospel of peace" (Eph 6:10-20). "The armor of God?" Love, of course. "A breastplate of righteousness?" Truth and justice. But "feet shod for the gospel of peace? What would these be like? They'd have to be sturdy with firm soles to hold one's ground. But they'd also need to allow for a lightness of step if the enemy comes in the form of another to be won over by goodness and peace. **Provision: Walk in peace.** A good follow-up from yesterday. (Frankly, I stomp around a lot!) Be true to what you believe, but step lightly in peace today.*

Fri, Nov 1: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit...those who mourn...the meek, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers" (Mt 5:1-12). Matthew's Beatitudes do not address the state of our lives so much as the state of our hearts. Are we aware of our dependence on God? Do we mourn not only our own losses, but those of all those who suffer indignity, including Mother Earth? Do we think of others first—the real meaning of meek—not out of obligation or subordination, but out of love? Do we seek justice and advocate for those who are oppressed? Do we keep a clean heart and clear conscience by seeking and offering forgiveness? Do we facilitate peace in our homes and communities? **Provision: Look at the state of your heart.** Note: Jesus never says, "Blessed are the perfect!" Pray today to be enlightened by Jesus' words. Where might you need some extra grace?*

Sat, Nov 2: *"But the souls of the just are in the hand of God. ...they shall shine as sparks through stubble" (Wis 2: 23-3:9). This is one of my favorite images in Scripture. It comes to life for me anytime I catch a glimmer of a loved one's spirit out of the corner of my eye. It is so comforting to know those who have gone before us can still be light amid the stubble of our every days. **Provision: Give thanks for our ancestors.** "Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy" (Native American proverb), Let's celebrate today those who have gone before us but still illuminate our lives.*