



Bringing Home the Word

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | August 12, 2018

Stop Murmuring and Go to God

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I have a clear memory of leaning over to the classmate in the next row and complaining about an assignment we had just been given. I wasn't the only one. Throughout the classroom, pairs of heads came together in a wave of rolling eyes and muttered remarks. I suppose we thought it went unnoticed. "Is there anything you would like to share with the rest of the class?" the teacher asked. "No, thank you," was the general response. We were a little embarrassed at having been found out.

That long-ago recollection surfaced as I read that the crowd "murmured" when Jesus said that he was the bread that came down from heaven. The word is also used of the Israelites who "murmured" about their hunger in the desert. Jesus calls them out by answering the question they thought he didn't hear. When he explains that he is greater than the manna that kept them alive in the desert, they can't believe their ears. They couldn't see that Jesus was far more than they understood him to be and they did not have faith in him because of that.

Has there ever been a time when you have murmured to yourself or someone else about God? Maybe God called you to ministry and you didn't believe him. Maybe he asked you to give up something and you complained like I did in that class of years past. Maybe you think God has been unfair to you. Save you breath; God hears you. Instead, go to him. Pour out your questions and fears and, with an open and willing heart, listen to the promise of life he alone can give you. +

Sunday Readings

1 Kings 19:4-8

[Elijah] prayed for death: "Enough, LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."

Ephesians 4:30-5:2

So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us.

John 6:41-51

[Jesus said,] "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Have you ever murmured to yourself or someone about God? Stop. Go to him.

A Word From Pope Francis

In Jesus his Son, God has come down among us. He took flesh and showed his solidarity with humanity in all things but sin.... He saw and embraced all of creation. But he did more than just see; he touched people's lives, he spoke to them, helped them and showed kindness to those in need.

—World Day of Peace, January 1, 2016



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Rather than murmur, do I accept what God has in mind for me?
- Do I regularly pour out my questions and fears to God?



We're All on the Same Team

By Fr. Thomas Richstatter, OFM

Being Catholic is a team effort. God's dreams for the world are too great for any of us to accomplish on our own. But we don't have to do it alone. We have the support of the saints.

When we use the title *saint* we usually think of men and women of exceptional holiness. But being a saint isn't the exception; it's the rule. We are *all* called to be saints. As members of Christ's body we are in communion with the other members of that body, living and dead; we participate in the communion of saints. Sainthood (holiness) is the essential element of Catholic identity!

The saints, living and dead, offer us encouragement and support. We celebrate each Eucharist in union with the local Church—the living saints—and in union with Mary, Joseph her husband, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, and John. We celebrate in the fellowship of Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, and Cecelia “on whose constant intercession we rely for help.” Saints of the present and past surround us. They intercede for us, praying to God on our behalf.

God's message of “I love you” has been heard in every age and country. Throughout the liturgical year we celebrate the memory of saints from

every continent and era to show how God has been at work in human lives. This great diversity reminds us that while Jesus' invitation to “follow me” remains constant, each of us must work out the details of how the Holy Spirit is active in the circumstances of our particular situations.

God's Instruments

When we celebrate the feasts of the saints, we are often amazed by their extraordinary achievements and sacrifices. But in recalling their memory we don't celebrate what *they* accomplished. Rather we rejoice at the wonderful things *God* accomplished through them. Our attention and prayers are always directed to God. It is God's strengths and gifts that we see reflected in the lives of these holy people.

We learn this Catholic focus on God from the greatest example of God's holiness shining forth in humanity: Mary. Jesus' mother proclaims, “My soul magnifies *the Lord*, and my spirit rejoices *in God*.” If anyone could brag about having done wonderful things for God, it would be Mary. But she has us look to the Mighty One who “has done great things for me.”

Mary, Our Model

Like Mary, we bear Christ in our bodies through baptism and Eucharist. We bring forth Christ to the world by our word and example. Mary's virginity points us to single-minded devotion to the will of God. Her sinlessness is a model for the Church, a reminder that we are to be God's holy people, God's saints. Mary's assumption into heaven foretells our own destiny as Church. Where she is, we one day hope to be.

In Mary we see a perfect example of how God acts. It is as though God depends on our cooperation for the salvation of the world. God waited for Mary's consent, Mary's “let it be with me according to your word,” to take flesh and come among us. Mary is the model of all holiness, for the essence of holiness is saying yes to God's will as we hear and understand it.

The communion of saints is integral to our Catholic identity. Being Catholic is a team effort. With Mary and all the saints on our team, we can be certain that God's dreams for the world will ultimately be accomplished. +

PRAYER

Lord, you give us your Spirit to renew the earth. Instill in my heart the spirit of love, compassion, forgiveness, and peace, that I may be a source of healing.

From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 13–18, 2018

Monday, Weekday:
Ez 1:2–5, 24–28c / Mt 17:22–27

Tuesday, St. Maximilian Kolbe:
Ez 2:8—3:4 / Mt 18:1–5, 10, 12–14

Wednesday, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab / 1 Cor 15:20–27 / Lk 1:39–56

Thursday, Weekday:
Ez 12:1–12 / Mt 18:21—19:1

Friday, Weekday: Ez 16:1–15, 60, 63
or Ez 16:59–63 / Mt 19:3–12

Saturday, Weekday:
Ez 18:1–10, 13b, 30–32 / Mt 19:13–15

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