



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time | August 26, 2018

Nowhere to Go, but With Jesus

By Mary Katharine Deeley

When confronted with a new idea or a new way of doing things, many of us hesitate. There is often a bit of fear in trying something new, and changing the way we do things is sometimes uncomfortable. I remember when we moved from an apartment to a new house. I was very unsettled for several days until a new routine could be established and the many boxes were out of the way. It was a change, and I didn't like it at first. Now I can't imagine that we would have raised our family anywhere else.

The many disciples who were following Jesus listened intently as he talked to them about living bread, and eating and drinking his flesh and blood. That new way of thinking was as unsettling as our new house had been—maybe more so. The apostles who were closest to him even admitted that it was a hard saying to accept, and John records that many followers left him and “returned to their former way of life.” But the apostles were willing to wrestle with it not because they were so wise, smart, or understanding, but because they believed that Jesus was the Holy One of God and that compelled them to follow him even to death. They had nowhere else to go; Jesus alone could give them what they craved: eternal life.

I've often wondered what I might have said had Jesus asked me if I also wanted to go away. I hope I could have overcome my fear long enough to recognize Jesus for who he was and for the gift he was bringing me. +

Sunday Readings

Joshua 24:1–2a, 15–17, 18b

[Joshua said,] “Choose today whom you will serve....

As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Ephesians 5:21–32 or 5:2a, 25–32

“For this reason a man shall leave [his] father and [his] mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

John 6:60–69

Simon Peter answered [Jesus], “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

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nowhere else to go;
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A Word From Pope Francis

The living legacy of martyrs gives us peace and unity today. They teach us that, with the power of love, with meekness, one can fight against arrogance, violence and war, and one can bring about peace with patience...O Lord, make us worthy witnesses to the gospel and to your love.

—Homily remembering martyrs of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,

April 22, 2017



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Following Jesus can be difficult. Do I have the conviction to follow him anyway?
- What do my words and actions say about me?



Embracing Sacred Time

By Richard Rohr, OFM

According to the psychologist Carl Jung, all humans need to confront the same question: Are we related to something infinite or not? Are we part of an enchanted universe or traveling in a desperate, private search for meaning?

Biblical revelation offers us the answer to this essential human question: Yes, we are part of something infinite—and wonderfully so!

Not only that, but we cannot know the meaning of our lives until we see that each life is but a thread in a much larger tapestry. Only within this context can each of us find our own private meaning.

Throughout history, religions have held that the way we know God is by finding him in spiritual places, following rituals, engaging in correct behavior. We have been told: Do all those things right and you will “get” God. Typically that is where religion has started—with the notion that if we answer correctly, then God will like us and we will meet God

Biblical revelation, however, takes us to a new level by telling us that we come to the real through the actual, through what is. So it’s not about finding God only in sacred places. The Bible transforms sacred place to sacred time. Time is transformed and experienced altogether

differently because, suddenly, God is available in all of time. That is why Jesus says the temple must fall—to lessen the importance of sacred places.

Now we understand that God is manifest in the ordinary, actual, and daily rather than only in the spiritual and special. This contrasts from what so many of us learned! There is no need to travel somewhere set apart to “be spiritual.” Amazingly, God is in the actual, real world.

Meeting God Daily

We are already spiritual beings. We just don’t know it! And the task of biblical revelation is to teach us how to be human, present, and to see the extraordinary in the ordinary. That is the whole miracle of biblical revelation: Think of the wars and adulteries, the marriages and festivals that make up much of the Bible—the ordinary events of life.

Perhaps that is why so many of us, Catholics in particular, didn’t like to read the Bible for so long. It wasn’t spiritual enough, special enough. In truth, it was like our lives, but we didn’t see the good news in that. But it is indeed good news that we meet God in the eventful world.

Lessons From Life

This lesson is most evident in the lives of the Jews, who were always situated in the bloody middle of history. We see it in their forty-year journey in the desert and again in their exile. The Jews let God come into their reality. They possessed a rare power to stand their ground before negative realities with God alone. They stood naked before their enemies, always trusting in God. How daring that was!

Our challenge today is to take these new awarenesses to heart. It will mean letting go of our certitude that God is to be found only in designated places and moments and, instead, surrendering to the scary mystery of God. It means allowing ourselves to be transformed. If we approach the Bible correctly, it leaves us humble and vulnerable. We need to let go of our answers and explanations and, instead, become blank slates before God, eager to listen to what God has to say.

Our reward will be a God who continually unfolds before us throughout the hours of our lives, the God who is ever with us. +

PRAYER

Lord, you reveal the wisdom of God in the hearts of all people. Help me teach others by example the wisdom of your love, forgiveness, and peace.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 27–
September 1, 2018

Monday, St. Monica:
2 Thes 1:1–5, 11–12 / Mt 23:13–22

Tuesday, St. Augustine:
2 Thes 2:1–3a, 14–17 / Mt 23:23–26

Wednesday, Passion of St. John the Baptist:
2 Thes 3:6–10, 16–18 / Mk 6:17–29

Thursday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:1–9 / Mt 24:42–51

Friday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:17–25 / Mt 25:1–13

Saturday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:26–31 / Mt 25:14–30