



Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 18, 2018

Looking for God's Signs

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I used to work with someone who was very patient with those he met and rarely expressed anger in public. But as I got to know him better, I began to recognize the small signs he gave off when he was irritated. His lips tightened. He would start drumming his fingers or moving his foot when seated. When that happened, we all knew to leave him alone as he worked out what he wanted to do. We also could act as sounding boards, helping him see different ways of looking at things. I thought this sign-seeing only went one way until one day he so accurately described what I do

when I start feeling stressed out that it made me laugh. I thought I hid my stress very well, and I probably did to those who didn't work with me every day.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus talks about the signs that will precede the coming of the Son of Man. He quotes the prophet Daniel, and the signs are disturbing: the sun will darken and the stars will fall. Such apocalyptic images (referring to the end times) are often found in times of persecution. This passage was written close to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans and encourages readers to remain faithful in what seems like end times because Christ will come again.

Of course, not everyone has faith or finds hope in what they see. The question posed to us—to all—is this: "Have we been with Christ long enough to know and see the signs that he will come again, or do we need to pay closer attention to him?" +

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Sunday Readings

Daniel 12:1-3

Those with insight shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament.

Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God.

Mark 13:24-32

[Jesus said,] "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory."

A Word from Pope Francis

If in the course of the liturgical year a parish priest speaks about temperance ten times but only mentions charity or justice two or three times, an imbalance results....The same thing happens when we speak more about law than about grace, more about the Church than about Christ.

—*Evangelii Gaudium*,
November 24, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Are you paying attention to the signs of God at work in your life?
- What are some of those signs that God is in our midst?



Fixing Our Eyes on God

By Kathy Coffey

*Blessed are the
clean of heart,
for they will see God
(Matthew 5:8).*

Let's use comparisons to better understand this beatitude. For instance, think of what's within a seed: sprout, stem, and flower. As the nineteenth-century Indian poet Mirza Ghalib writes: "Hidden in this image is also its end." The final act is there at the beginning: the overture contains all the musical themes; the process unfolds with a mysterious but natural logic to a predictable conclusion.

One example comes from the life of Dorothy Day. Pushing her baby brother in his carriage through the Chicago tenements, she discovered the major theme of her life: compassion for the poor. Despite an obstacle course that might make lesser souls waver, she persisted in establishing the Catholic Worker movement and its hospitality houses. She suffered jail time for her insistence on nonviolence, remaining faithful to unpopular stands. Always her closeness to Christ was the foundation for her passionate commitments to justice and peace.

In just such a natural unfolding, the clean of heart will some day look with joy into the face of God. Throughout their lives, they have cherished this hope and put other things aside because they have set their sights on God. With eyes fixed on what matters most, they forget to fret about themselves.

Our Shining Model

During this process, which is often costly, their shining model is Jesus. At the heart of his being, the core of consciousness was Abba. The image of his Father brought him such joy that he could endure a difficult life and a tortured death. When the disciples misunderstood him, the people hounded him, the religious authorities tormented him, and the Roman soldiers beat him, he held fast to one thing that sustained him: union with God.

If we want a picture of the clean of heart, we need look no further than Jesus. He had an inner freedom from the self-defensive, clinging postures that often define us. When we feel insecure, we act out of fear or a sense of scarcity. "Better grab my slice of the pie," we reason. "There's not enough to go around." As long as we're shoring up our shaky egos, we don't much care about others we're pushing around or ignoring in the process.


But Jesus acts always from the clean center, the sure knowledge given to the loyal son in the Prodigal Son parable: "Everything I have is yours" (Luke 15:31).

The good news is, he wants us to share his experience. He wants us to have his clean heart and interior serenity. "I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me" (John 17:24). He wants us to soar, to shine.

Clarity of Vision

If you meet people who are clean of heart, you'll recognize the attributes of Jesus. They can shrug off assaults on their turf; they don't get angry about trivia. Often they have a marvelous sense of humor. They can be relaxed about things that don't matter because they know what does matter. They are firmly focused on the pursuit of God's reign. Serving God is so important that they toss aside things the rest of us clutch: personal comfort, career success, financial security.

And we who are saddled with obligations and cluttered with possessions: How do we become clean of heart? We could start by looking at two modern barometers of commitment: the calendar and the checkbook. Where have we placed our time and treasure? Where have we channeled our energies? Do our gifts serve God's mission? +



PRAYER

*Lord, I am grateful you keep
me safe in your love.
You are my hope.
Help me to trust you.*

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

WEEKDAY READINGS <i>November 19-24</i>	Monday	<i>Weekday: Rv 1:1-4; 2:1-5 / Lk 18:35-43</i>	Thursday	<i>St. Cecilia: Rv 5:1-10 / Lk 19:41-44</i>
	Tuesday	<i>Weekday: Rv 3:1-6, 14-22 / Lk 19:1-10</i>	Friday	<i>Weekday: Rv 10:8-11 / Lk 19:45-48</i>
	Wednesday	<i>Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Rv 4:1-11 / Lk 19:11-28</i>	Saturday	<i>St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc and Companions: Rv 11:4-12 / Lk 20:27-40</i>