

Commentary to the 12 Sunday Ordinary Time B



As I was thinking about the readings for this week and the fact that this Sunday is Father's Day, (Let's hear it for equal time for the dads!), I reflected on a series of complaints that I often hear from some of our fathers. They go something like this: "You know, I would just like to have a few days without turmoil. Somebody in the family is usually in trouble, most often me. This Teen missed her curfew, that child lied to us, my wife is upset over something someone said to her, and somehow, beyond my knowledge, I get blamed for part if not all of it.

There's sickness, someone is always not feeling well and that is scary particularly when it is the children. There's the bills. I'm not even going to go there. And then there are the relatives. I can't figure out whose family is crazier, mine or hers, but they are running a tight race. Then there is work which so help me I wouldn't do if they didn't pay me. I turn on the news. What a break that is. I'm not sure if we are going into global warming or global freezing, but somehow it's going to be bad. Between the politicians, the economy, and world events, every day it looks like everything is even worse than the day before. The world is in turmoil." I am sure that everyone here, not just the dads, have had similar feelings. It's probably why we all wish we were back in kindergarten when the only real concern we had in life had to do with getting to the bathroom in time. Look at the kindergartners. They laugh most of the day, except when they are crying, and then a quick kiss on the boo-boo from Mom and all is right with the world again. But we are not in kindergarten any more. We are in the real world. And the real world has turmoil. The readings for this Sunday speak about turmoil. The first is from the Book of Job. This is the conclusion to the main section of Job. In the main section of Job, from the middle of chapter 2 to the beginning of chapter 42, Job questions God. Job had lost his livelihood. He had lost his children. He was in terrible physical pain. Chapter 3 begins, "Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

Three friends show up to commiserate with him, but make matters worse by saying that he must have done something horrible to deserve all this. They are like the holier than thou friend who tells people that they are responsible for their misery. A fourth, younger man comes, but he just adds coal to the fire by suggesting that Job was not the good man everyone thought he was. Job responds, "I loathe my life." At the conclusion of this book of wisdom, God speaks. Part of that is in today's first reading. God says, "I am present healing the turmoil. Do not question me. Have faith in me. Look, I took control of the seas, the ancient symbol of chaos." God is telling Job that He is mightier than any turmoil. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the people of Corinth, and us, that Christ died so that we might be raised up with Him. He turned defeat into victory. He is infinitely more powerful than the most powerful force in the world, death. God's power over turmoil is particularly seen in the Gospel reading. A storm suddenly comes upon the disciples as they are crossing the Sea of Galilee. The boat is rocking. The ship is probably going to sink. But Jesus is on board, asleep. In a panic, they wake Him. He quells the storm, and then asks them if they really have faith in Him and in His Father. And that is the message we all have to remember. Turmoil is normal because we live in an imperfect world, a world that rejected the Perfect One. Turmoil is normal, but God is greater than the turmoil. He sees. He knows. He controls. Only He does that His way, not our way. So the trials of the family actually help the dad and the mom, as well as the children, become more giving, more Christlike. The effort to solve this or that problem are more important than its solution.

And in the long run, and through faith, God's hand is seen in the turmoil. We pray to God, and He does answer our prayers. Sometime, though, he says, "No, I have a better idea that ultimately is going to serve the growth of the Kingdom." So, the people prayed that somehow Bishop Ignatius of Antioch would be spared from the beasts in the Colosseum, but God had another idea that resulted in the witness of Ignatius's life still bringing growth to the Church even in a place as far away from Antioch and Rome as Tarpon Springs, FLorida. So, the family prayed that their child might survive this horrible disease, but God knew that although the child's life would be brief it would be infinitely valuable. So, the Teen prayed to get into that college, but God knew that the real opportunity for spiritual growth would be in another college, or, perhaps, no college at all. And the young man prayed that God would let that girl love him. And, as the old country song goes, ten years later he thanked God for unanswered prayers. Look, it is hard to have faith when we are in turmoil. Everything appears black when there do not appear to be any solutions or end of problems. But we need to be people of faith. We need to trust in God in the darkness as well as in the light. Natalie Grant's song Held speaks to all our hearts: Two months is too little. They let him go. They had no sudden healing.

To think that providence would take a child from his mother while she prays is appalling. Who told us we'd be rescued? What has changed and why should we be saved from nightmares? We're asking, why this has happened to us who have died to live. This is what it means to be held. How it feels when the sacred is torn from your life....and you survive. This is what it means to be loved, and to know that the promise was when everything fell...we'd be held. The hand is bitterness. We want to taste it, let the hatred numb our sorrows. The wise hands open slowly to lilies of the valley and tomorrow. If hope is born of suffering, if this is only the beginning, can we not wait for one hour watching for our Saviour? This is what it means to be held. We pray today that when turmoil hits, we might remain

people of faith.

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