

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jun 9th 2013

Recently I have come across this word in several different kinds of literature that hence, seems to be an in-word. “Detritus” means several kinds of reduced particles of grinded-up rock or decaying biological matter. So now you know what I had to look up. It has Latin roots of course, but is quite a picturesque collection of meanings. You will probably be running into it now that you have it all plainly uncovered.

I am amazed at the amount of detritus in my head. Given the right stimuli I can recall mostly things I wish I could send easily to the un-recycle bin of my mind. Things seem to surface which do not even have any stimuli, they are just floating around in my own personal me-esphere waiting for some prayer time to put it to rest. This recovery time seems, for me, to be well spent time in prayer. Grace does not seem to say, “Oh, let it go.” Grace rather says, “Let it be a part of how you are created.”

This becomes part of each day’s offering at the Eucharist and the reception of his Holy Body and Blood seems to say, “Live with your self more peacefully, because I do, even with your detritus.”

REFLECTION

We hear in today’s First Reading from the First Book of Kings, a wonderful story of the recovery of life of a son and recovery of faith for his widowed mother. Elijah is one of the great prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. Unlike many of the other prophets he does amazing things, usually for the poor and needy. The other prophets have their duties of denouncing the present causes of God’s coming punishments and announces calls of repentance. Elijah walks around doing the good deeds which announce the presence of the Living and active God.

We hear today how Elijah is taken into the house, as a guest, of a widowed mother. While he is staying there, the mother’s son has a breathing attack and seems to be dying on his mother’s lap. She questions whether Elijah has brought the sickness upon her son to punish her for some free-floating guilt she might have.

Elijah takes the son from his mother and celebrates a kind of liturgy where he calls upon God and seems to press life into the lad’s body and lungs. Elijah then returns the boy to his mother who then makes her faith-statement of praise. In great joy and gratitude the mother acknowledges Elijah, not as a

punisher from God, but as a Holy Presence of God. It is a little story of how we, as humans, distrust in the hard times of loss and fear and how much easier it is to thank God when we see how things do work out.

The Gospel has a similar little story about a widow who is accompanying the funeral procession of her only son and she is a widow. These are two important elements, her being a widow and having only one son who is now dead. Having a husband and having a son were signs of God's blessing a woman in the times of Jesus. Jesus is moved by the sight and approaches the dead man. "Young man, I tell you, arise." As Elijah rises, Jesus gave the mother back her son who began speaking. All who heard him and saw what Jesus had done, responded in great proclamations of faith that God had visited his people. The Jewish telegram service began sending reports of this Jesus who is now living out exactly what he announced he would be doing when he unrolled the scroll in his hometown. He was going to be the fulfillment of all the predictions of the coming Anointed One. We will spend the remainder of these Ordinary Times watching, listening to our Savior at His best.

Here's a little pondering I have been doing about this man who was raised from death and began speaking. We know that the fame of Jesus was spreading throughout Israel. I was reflecting about how exactly did the raised-man live out his life. Did he become a celebrity and kept talking about his short trip was to the "other side"? Was it all about him? His healing was about him for a little while anyway.

There is much about being personal in our relationship with Jesus. There can be a subtle kind of selfishness in our spirituality. Our prayer can be all about ourselves, all about me. We do want to be better, more virtuous, trusting and such. We can become celebrities in our own prayerful way. It is attractive of course, nobody is more interesting to us than ourselves.

I offer that our prayer, our recovery, our relationship with Jesus is completed and perfected by how we are returned to community, to all of ourselves. The more we have of ourselves, the more we are ourselves in relationship with others.

Prayer, then, can become a dangerous activity.

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer; my God is my saving strength."

Larry Gillick, S.J.