

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Sep 4th 2013

Today's readings indicate a very simple and recurring message that can be summed up in two words: trust and grace. The concepts of trust and grace are two of my favorites along with faith, hope, and love. While the words are simple, the concepts are nothing short of awesome.

A number of years ago I wrote of trust and how the word itself has special meaning. As I noted previously, TrusT begins and ends with the cross and "u" is in the middle or "us" if you prefer. Either way, it is with our trust in God that we navigate this frail life. It is trust that forms (or should form) the foundation of our very existence. We learn trust at a very early age – babies trust that someone will pick them up when they cry – someone will feed them – hold them – change them. It may not be a conscious concept at that point in life, labeled with a word to describe it, nonetheless it is felt. It is that trust in our initial care providers that allows us to trust as we develop as thinking, feeling beings. We trust in God (even our money says so!). How is that trust manifest? We may not realize right away about the sacrifices that have been made on our behalf. We may not fully understand the meaning of the cross that begins and ends the word TrusT. While I can articulate much about trust, it is still very challenging at times. I heard a song just this weekend that lyrics referenced trust and that God had never let us down before. I remember using that same line with my children many years ago when I was in a challenging professional position. I calmly told them that God had never let me down before and I was sure he wouldn't now – that I would trust and search for the lesson to be learned with the situation.

For me, the greatest challenges for trust come when my children are involved. I pray and ask God's presence in their lives – I ask for their hearts to be open. But I have to be very deliberate in my trust that seems to come more easily when it is my life rather than theirs. I know that such trust will give me peace, and I do come to it, but the road is bumpier.

On to Grace, a most beautiful word and concept that I also want to explore. We are so blessed to have such a concept in our lives. Grace – given although not deserved – just there for us when we believe. I think of the "grace" policies on insurance that I remember my mother mentioning when I was a child. It finally made sense as a young adult that this gift is truly that – a gift given freely not earned. As I was reflecting on Grace, I realized that most times when I need to give a "public" prayer I start with "Good and Gracious God." Our God is, indeed, gracious – the embodiment of grace and all it means. I feel surrounded by grace always. I could not imagine a greater compliment than to be called gracious or graceful. My maternal grandmother's maiden name was Gracie. When I looked up the meaning of that surname, the internet source identified it as descendent of Grace. No wonder I feel wrapped in it and comforted by it. I try always to remember it is by the Grace of God that I am who I am today and where I am today. I believe that I have used my gifts well but it is clear that these gifts were not originally earned. As we have heard before, our lives are our gift from God, what with do with them is our gift to God. Make God smile today with your gift to him!

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