

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Apr 11th 2014

The reading from Jeremiah reminds us that God is with us during difficult times, though I often fail to look for and seek God at such times. When faced with a difficult situation, I can easily get bogged down in recriminations, unbalanced views, and spiraling downward instead of towards God.

However, we are reminded in Jeremiah that God is with us, that God is truly Emmanuel, as the Scriptures tell us. If we want to know what kind of God we believe in, and know who God is for us and how God acts, then we need to hear the words at the end of this reading: God has “rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked.”

These words challenge me, because I need to acknowledge that our God is a God who acts on behalf of all, but especially on behalf of the poor. One question for me is - what have I done for the poor lately? Do I see the face of Christ in my poor brothers and sisters, or do I see them as bothersome? I need to check my attitude and my thoughts when I take someone to buy them food, because I'm being given the opportunity to encounter Christ. Yet I've sometimes found myself asking if I'm really doing this person any good and how long it will take. A good question for me is “am I serving this person?” If I'm serving, as Jesus invited his followers to do, then hopefully I can step back and let go of any particular outcome and any need to fix a person or situation.

My experience in life is that life tests me sometimes, whether I'm being tested to let my children grow by making their own mistakes or being tested to find Christ in a challenging situation. Jesus does call us to follow and trust that Jesus is with us, in good times and in more challenging times. Just as Jesus performed the works of God the Creator, Jesus can continue to perform works in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. What is in my heart? Do I believe that Jesus is with me, with all of us, calling us to follow and find Jesus in every person and in every situation? How can I respond to Jesus in each day and each moment, even when I'm not sure where the road leads? Let's pray to find Jesus in the faces of all our brothers and sisters, in all of life's moments, and in our hearts. Let us turn to the Jesus who loves, redeems, and calls us, and pray “be with me, Jesus, and help me to seek you in this moment.”

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