

## Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, May 15th 2014

The liturgies of the Easter Season provide a constant reflection on what living in the Reign of God entails. Each day we hear the preaching about God's activities that have brought forth God's reign on earth and we are invited to prayerfully consider Jesus' "blueprint" for the Kingdom given in the long discourse attributed by John to the Last Supper (note the Eucharistic setting.)

It seems to me that today's texts can be well entered through the lens of gratitude. The long litany of what God has done for us is a virtual "dayenu," which is a Passover litany of all that God has done to prepare the Jewish people for liberation. For Christians the gift is all that God has done to prepare us for the in-breaking of the Kingdom - or as John describes it - the dawning of eternal life. Lest we think that eternal life is only about after death, we need to ponder carefully the fact that like "reign of God" or "kingdom of God" talk - eternal life talk is about intimate participation in God's own being - which is made possible here on earth by the outpouring of God's Spirit effected through Jesus' death and Resurrection. No longer is the Spirit given only to one or another prophet or prophetic moment, rather the Spirit now dwells permanently in the lives of human persons who give themselves to God's will for disclosing God's plan long hidden and now revealed through Jesus Christ. This is the wonderful truth of Easter in the here and now.

Paul's homily today in the Synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia lays out that plan of God as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. The invitation of Paul to his listeners is embrace FAITH and GRATITUDE. If we have faith in God's actions and God's plan for us, then our only suitable action response is gratitude.

When people act out of genuine gratitude, they are humble, they follow the desire of the source of the gift and they act on behalf of the gift-giver. Eternal Life is to participate in gratitude in very immediate and practical ways. If someone does not act in gratitude it is a betrayal - as today's Gospel indicates in a reference to Judas - of the very gift of life that we have been given.

Today is a great day to list the things that God has done in our lives for which we can be truly grateful.

Today - in this lovely month of May - whatever tragedies or difficulties have come into our lives - God is still in charge, eternal life is still the gift we have already been given, and the capacity to live forever in joy is ours. For today at least I want to set aside any grumbling about my "lot" in life and rejoice that my lot is eternal joy. Would you like to join me in expressing gratitude for that glorious truth?! Perhaps it will even hold over until tomorrow and next week and . . .

"Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord!" (Psalm 89)

Eileen Burke-Sullivan