

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jun 25th 2014

Today's readings emphasize rules and decrees and warn us of false prophets. Yet sometimes (at least for me) it is a challenge to understand what are the "decrees" to be followed and what are the ones of "false prophets." I take comfort in returning to the scriptures and readings such as today's readings to provide that guiding force. I know that I must stop often and examine myself – my actions, my words, and my omissions – to be sure that I am following the true expectations of God. Some standards in the secular world seem contradictory to these true expectations. My challenge is always trying to find the balance and the truth.

A litmus test for me, is the "feeling" I get. That little "nag" when I am trying to rationalize that what I'm doing is okay. As I really examine it I realize that I'm cutting corners or putting a spin on it that certainly conforms to the secular world but is not leading me to the regards of the spiritual world. I plod along with my feet of clay until I stop to shake it off my feet. Until I'm willing to do some soul searching and rid myself of the "false prophets" and follow the teachings of Christ. WWJD – an acronym that does echo clearly – I have to ask myself, "Really?" And . . . I need to stretch myself to do what is "Right" – to truly forgive someone without reservation or to reach out without resentment or expectation of payback and help someone. That is what my role model would do, that is what I should do . . .

"It's a God thing." An expression that I hear often and now see listed on my favorite radio station's website. This site is a collection of stories where God's hand is evident – a place to record everyday miracles. Hearing about this site frequently, I have been thinking a great deal about an experience that a friend had a number of years. When something keeps in my heart and head, I feel it is God putting it on my heart to share. Therefore, as I prepared this reflection, I felt the experience needed to be part of it.

A colleague of mine in the military had had some difficult times – physically, emotionally, and financially. When he received orders for deployment, he took it in stride and thought that perhaps it was an opportunity to have some financial relief at least. Although he was not Catholic, a Catholic friend gave him rosary beads before he left. One day during his deployment, he reached into his pocket for something; when he did, the rosary beads fell on the ground. He stooped down to pick them up. At that moment, he was in front of a concrete wall and as he stooped down, there was an incoming attack – the wall protected him since he was completely behind it picking up the rosary. I knew nothing of this until he was back in the states and stopped by my office one day he was on campus. As I heard the story the first time, I was filled with awe (and goose bumps).

This was, indeed, a "God thing." It was amazing that so many aspects came together to protect him and truly save his life: 1) the fact that a Catholic friend would even give him the rosary beads knowing he was not Catholic; 2) the fact that he brought the beads with him and carried them in his pocket

everyday; and, 3) the fact that they fell out right when he was behind the wall. I am still in awe as I think about this today and feel the Holy Spirit at work. It was not lost on him that this truly was a miracle that saved his life. Another everyday miracle where God reminds us He is there.

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