

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Mar 19th 2015

I had to smile when I saw the day that I was asked to reflect on the readings. March 19th has always been a special day for me. My heritage is Polish with all four of my grandparents entering the U.S. through Ellis Island. In the Polish tradition your name day is often celebrated with more vim and vigor than your actual birthday. Of course, as our family became more Americanized, the emphasis gradually switched from the religious aspect of one's saint's name to the more secular birthday celebration. Despite this our home always did a little special celebration of my name day which was reinforced at my Catholic grade school. The good Franciscan sisters always taught us about our name saint and expected us to emulate their virtues. There was no losing of tradition there. We were even taught the Polish language for a few years and there still is a Polish Mass celebrated at the parish which served as a reminder of our heritage.

This gospel reading was a good recollection of St. Joseph as my role model. In today's gospel we see Joseph as a righteous man. He, at first chose, not to disgrace Mary but divorce her quietly. In those days Mary could have been led out of town and stoned to death for her perceived indiscretion. Joseph chose the path of tolerance and love. This is something I need to remind myself about when I meet trying circumstances and difficult people. A message then came from an angel that Joseph followed without question. He was to remain with Mary as her spouse.

In my life I need to examine when God sends a messenger, do I listen? Am I even aware a message is being sent? Have I opened myself up to hear God? The message I received from his reading speaks to me as a father and a husband. Joseph is a role model that is there if I just choose to follow. The challenge is to put the choice into action

As I close I am also smiling at the end of this reflection. My wife's name is Mary and friends and relatives often laugh and call us "the holy family." This is certainly useful when we introduce ourselves meeting new people. Hopefully this is a model we can emulate. It is good to keep in mind in that, in the realm of spiritual growth, it is progress not perfection.

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