

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, May 23rd 2015

This weekend, here in the United States of America, we are celebrating the memories of those who have died in our too many wars. From the rows and rows of white crosses and Stars of David near the shores of Normandy to the grassy slopes of The Arlington National Cemetery and all the other private and public places of rest, we will be reminded of those who gave their lives in the service of our faiths, our hopes and our love of freedom.

This is also Pentecost weekend during which we recall and venerate the sending of the Holy Spirit Who labors to preserve our Faith, Hope and Charity as lived among the living. It is a memorial recalling that the God Who sent His Son to live, die and rise also gives us the Spirit of that same Love that we might continue our freedom for which He gave His life. With the Holy Spirit God continues giving us that Love.

The Gospel is the concluding verses of John's account of Jesus' being the Light which is to be seen and everything else is to be seen because of that same Light. We have seen recently in the daily liturgies, of Jesus' meeting the Apostles, helping them, catch fish by which He caught their attention, as well as His having a little breakfast with them Jesus has brought Peter close and had him affirm his faith in Jesus three times. What we read today is the final call of Peter and only Peter.

At the beginning of our reading, Jesus, when followed by two of The Baptist's disciples, turns and asks a thematic question of John's Gospel, "For what are you seeking?" The two followers reply by asking Jesus where He is staying. Then Jesus makes another very important statement, "Come and see." Jesus does not say, "Come and find out", or "Let me tell you everything you ever have wanted to know about everything." Jesus as the Light of the World invites these two as He will invite others and ourselves as well, to keep coming, keep seeing and so keep believing. For John, believing is seeing the "signs" so that believing beyond "signs" will be what it means "to follow".

So this Gospel ends with Peter's having seen enough "signs" including the catching of 153 fish after catching nothing, apart from Jesus, during the darkness of their past night. Perhaps when looking back at the Disciple Who Jesus Loved who was following Peter, Peter is asking for one more "sign", a companion whom Peter could trust for support. Jesus says that that disciple has his own calling as does Peter and Peter's calling is to trust-walk with the Sign-Maker into the rest of the story, the end of which Peter is not aware of just then.

The final verses are a summary statement that the "signs" are there to be seen and the ones who can see are no longer blind, but believe, because of having seen. There were many other events, but these have been just the right amount for Peter and the reader of the Book of Signs and the Book of Glory which comprise John's Gospel.

With the coming of the Spirit we are given the gift of faith which is a variety of vision by which we look or and receive "signs" of the presence of Jesus and of His calling us into the beyond, into the unknown of our tomorrows. We, like Peter, will always want assurances, companions, and more "signs" to make believing a little bit easier. God gives us just the right amount of what's good for our individual response. As the many tomb stones are reminders, memorials to be remembered, so this

weekend of Pentecost, we are encouraged to look backward at the “signs” of our times, so we can follow Him forward into His times.

Larry Gillick, S.J.-Creighton University Deglman Center for Ignation Spirituality