

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Aug 11th 2015

Memorial of Saint Claire, Virgin

In today's reading from Deuteronomy, Moses encourages the people and their new leader Joshua to have courage based on trust in the Lord as they face their new challenges. The responsorial psalm, which provides a message of God's historical support, also comes from Deuteronomy. In the Gospel, Jesus' message encourages the faithful to be like a child, that is, like someone living dependent on one's father/mother, again a message of putting one's trust in God.

As I imagine myself in the context of these readings, I hear Moses' call and Jesus' call to move forward with trust. This is a very challenging message. Trust is hard, particularly when we have been raised with the experience of people preying on human innocence. (As I was writing this, I received a call on my cell phone from a person who claimed there is a problem with my computer, which he could "fix" if I were only to share my username and password.) We all have been tricked and duped multiple times in our past. Even the institutions that we held in such high regard have suffered from corruption. We constantly become aware of things that are not right at the international level, within our own country, in our work environment, in our family and in ourselves. It is hard to trust.

A second theme in these readings that is equally challenging is the call to action. Change is not easy. We are comfortable doing the things with which we are familiar. Moving forward requires effort and potential risk. I see how many decisions are taken to avoid the possibility of an adverse outcome and how few are taken out of a sense of following the call to what we should be doing. We recently celebrated the feast of St. Ignatius and today is the feast of St. Claire. These individuals were risk takers who responded to their call. They were not following the popular culture. There seems to be a history of valuing the soldier of fortune, both in the military sense and in the entrepreneurial sense. The valued fortune of Ignatius and Claire does not fit this mold. They lived out the call to change found in today's readings.

I am just getting back from vacation. Instead of finding myself energized and eager to face new challenges, I find myself slow to get back the pace I had before leaving. Part of this is due to a shortage of trust and this lack of trust leads to a fear of the new challenges. I find it difficult to put myself into God's hands with the faith and trust of a child. Time and my human experience have eroded this trust. My prayer today considers the relation between the two themes that moved me in today's readings.

Dear Lord,

I find that trust is the thing that makes change possible.

I pray for a renewed trust in You.

Mike Cherney-Creighton University's Physics Department