

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 11th 2015

Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours, Bishop

Today's reading from the Book of Wisdom is a reminder to those in positions of authority that they are accountable for their actions. The Psalm makes clear the responsibilities regarding the acceptance and care of the marginalized. The Gospel reminds us that the outsider may have a greater awareness than those in the mainstream.

Abuse, harassment and bullying are words that have come to prominence in our contemporary vocabulary. The scripture readings suggest these behaviors are nothing new. How do we respond when those in a position of power encroach on our space? Some people acquiesce. Others strike back. When I watch the news I see the unfortunate results of these kinds of interactions on a societal level. In the lives of those near to me I see the unfortunate results on a personal level.

I remember that today, November 11th, was called Armistice Day when I was young. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 was remembered as the moment that brought an end to the quagmire of hostilities along the Western Front in the War to End All Wars. My recollections from childhood carried the sense of a holiday celebrating the cessation of conflict.

We are now less than a month from the start of the Year of Mercy, the year of focusing on reconciliation and service to those in both spiritual and physical need. In the United States this year will also present the challenges of a period of intense political posturing and promises. We are a diverse people. We respond to the same conditions in different ways. My prayer today is for a new openness. I pray that in our encounters with others that we take a genuine interest in their story.

Dear Lord,

I pray for the gift of listening with an open heart.

I pray for a willingness to be open to forgive what I might have thought unforgivable.

In gratitude for the gifts that I have received,

I pray for strength and consolation in finding ways of service to others.

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