

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Nov 28th 2015

In reading the Gospel lesson for this day, if you're anything at all like me, you easily set aside any worry about your heart becoming drowsy from carousing and drunkenness. Despite the many excesses that often accompany the holiday celebrated this week in the United States, that is "Thanksgiving", including feasts of plenty, few of us fall prey to such excess with such regularity that we lose sight of what is good and right and holy.

However, like me you may have thought about times that your heart has become drowsy and the reasons it has done so. Perhaps it has been fatigued by the incessant oppression and human suffering that it hears about or experiences each day, whether in its own backyard or in communities far away. Or maybe it shrinks into itself at the sound of a mother's wailing at the loss of her child, as occurred in our own Creighton family earlier this term. The pain of the world can be a weight almost too great to bear, and our hearts can become exhausted and unforgiving of our God in such moments. We can be 'caught' turning away from our faith, leaving trust in God to others with happier lives; with fewer struggles. In difficult times, our hearts can become sick and drowsy.

Yet it is in these moments when we least have energy for God, that we most need to exercise our heart muscle. When we feel great loss, that we give thanks for our blessings. When we recognize weakness, that we pray for strength. When we fall short, that we ask forgiveness. This vigilance – call it spiritual self-discipline if you will – not only prepares us to stand before Christ at his coming, whatever the unexpected moment that he arrives, but also quite selfishly heals and reopens our hearts. This is the paradoxical gift of our focus on God: that we then experience and recognize in prayer God's love, God's will, and God's adoration for us. This prepares us for the life everlasting AND gives us the strength to risk our hearts to another day. So yes, be vigilant! That preparation for tomorrow will make for a more beautiful today.

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