

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jan 21st 2016

Memorial of Saint Agnes, Virgin and Martyr

In the first reading today, we hear of Saul's jealousy of David, a jealousy that has a good end for David, as he remains alive. This all-too-human emotion is something we battle with today, perhaps even more in the consumer-saturated society we live in. Someone has more than me. Someone likes someone more than me. Why does she get everything? Why don't I have a nicer house/car/whatever? Why don't I get more? Letting jealousy and resentment seep into our lives can be poisonous to relationships and to our own spirit. Focusing on what someone else has and what I don't have makes us lose sight of what we do have. It makes us lose sight of our own talents and strengths that may be different, yet no less valuable. Seeing God in all things also means seeing God in ourselves. When we find ourselves caught up in jealousy and resentment, that's a sign to stop and ask for God for the antidote.

An old song suggests we count our blessings when we can't sleep. Instead of worrying about what others have that we don't, we can dwell on how blessed we are. Our lives have challenges and pitfalls, but we can ask God to help us find ways to cope and overcome them. We also can ask God to help us focus on our lives and what we are doing instead of taking note of what others have and don't have.

Taking the time to count our blessings, whether every night or every morning or whenever we feel resentment and jealousy, is a good recipe for clearing those toxins out of our systems.

In the Gospel today, we read of Jesus' working miracles yet being surrounded by so many people that he was afraid of being crushed. Jesus was a man and God, and he, like us, needed space and time to reflect and refresh. We need to rest our spirits as well as our bodies so we can do the work and live the lives we are meant to. Taking time to count our blessings and thank God for them is one way to refresh and rest.

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