

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Aug 8th 2016

Today is the feast of St. Dominic, patron saint of the Dominican Republic (DR). In fact, the country was first known as Santo Domingo (Spanish for St. Dominic) and the capitol city still bears that name. Since one of my passions is serving the rural campos in the DR, I was most interested in learning more about this extraordinary saint. There are so many compelling aspects to St. Dominic's life.

As a young priest, he recognized the need to connect with the people through example. While he may have remained a contemplative in more isolation, a trip revealed to him, the need for action. Indeed, he lived what we identify here at Creighton recognize as an important Ignatian carism: he lived as a contemplative in active apostolic work. Similarly to St. Ignatius, St. Dominic recognized that the conversion of others required action and being a role model. Ascribing to a life of austerity and acerbic behavior, he lived with the people and showed great devotion to Mary. It has been said that the spread of the Rosary, a Marian devotion, is attributed to the preaching of St. Dominic. The Rosary has for centuries been at the heart of the Dominican Order. Pope Pius XI stated, The Rosary of Mary is the principle and foundation on which the very Order of Saint Dominic rests for making perfect the life of its members and obtaining the salvation of others. For centuries, Dominicans have been instrumental in spreading the rosary and emphasizing the Catholic belief in the power of the rosary.

There is a wonderful story/legend about St. Dominic according to a number of sources.

Legend has it that Dominic saw the sinful world threatened by God's anger but saved by the intercession of Mary, who pointed out to her Son two figures: One was Dominic himself, the other a stranger. In church the next day he saw a ragged beggar enter—the man in the vision. He went up to him, embraced him and said, "You are my companion and must walk with me. If we hold together, no earthly power can withstand us." The beggar was Francis of Assisi. The meeting of the two founders is commemorated twice a year, when on their respective feast days Dominicans and Franciscans celebrate Mass in each other's churches and afterward sit at the same table "to eat the bread which for seven centuries has never been wanting" (Butler's Lives of the Saints).

Our first reading from the Old Testament presents a picture of what the glory of God will be like. It is an image of light and fire. I remember as a small child trying to understand what Heaven would be like. My child-like view was a place of beauty where we were all balls of light with our earthly bodies gone but what I imagine as our essence still there. The responsorial psalm echoes the thoughts of the glory of God as we recite the familiar phrase of Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory! There certainly are glorious moments on this earth, but I believe they will all pale in the light of the Glory that awaits us. Even the alleluia verse, God has called you through the Gospel to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, calls us to ponder on this glory.

In the gospel, Jesus reminds us that we are part of the kingdom of God – that we are subjects of this great kingdom. As we consider our role in that kingdom, we can take comfort in knowing that the king protects his subjects and wants them to thrive. We render those things to our earthly home that we

must, but we aspire to far greater things.

As I think about the God's glory, I am reminded of the song, I Can Only Imagine, the lyrics speak to what we may do when we actually experience that Glory! Since today marks a very personal memory for me as it was 55 years ago on this day that my brother died, I have been thinking a great deal about what happens when we are no longer on this earth. I think about him and my parents, praying, hoping, and believing that they are altogether bathing in the glory of God.

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