

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Aug 13th 2016

I think the readings today offer us the opportunity for some interesting contrasts. The first reading is clear about what the Lord God expects and also does not accept. In looking at the positive, the behaviors we should demonstrate, we see more opportunity for how we should live our lives. The Responsorial Psalm builds on this theme so that lest we think we are doing all such good deeds and take pride in them, our hearts need to be humbled.

The contrast I would also explore comes from my current personal experience. I am working from home for two days recovering from my second chemotherapy treatment, which created much more discomfort than the first. I kind of sailed through the first and thought I can push through this. Not so much. The second one just about incapacitated for me for two days. Now that the pain is better my white blood cell count is at dangerously low levels, as expected, so I am protecting myself from infection. My ability to navigate this journey is due to all those people around me following the first reading. They are providing food for me, performing my laundry, not judging my incapacitation, but accepting it. These individuals walk my dogs, water my flowers, and take me to buy multiple hats. They have started and have continued despite my protestations. I realized that I had given them the opportunity to follow the first reading, and they gave me the opportunity to be humbled.

The Gospel reading is one of my favorites as I know it is for many others. I have been blessed with four children and three grandchildren. There is nothing comparable to the opportunity that I have been given to be a part of their growing up. My grandchildren call me Mar Mar. I believe it is because it rhymed with the dog's name, Bear Bear but... I was with the 7 year old about two weeks after my first chemotherapy treatment. He looked at me on Sunday and said, "Mar Mar, You have lost a lot of hair since yesterday". He then wanted to go play basketball. I was fortunate to be surrounded by a 7, 5, and 3 year old during what could have been a trying time for me. But children are realistic, matter-of-fact, honest, and accepting. What more could we ask for than "the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"?

Mary Tracy-Creighton University's College of Nursing