

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Apr 22nd 2017

Both of today's lessons following the Easter Resurrection remind us of our obligation – it is our duty and our joy – to spread the Good News of our Lord. The Gospel reading is quite clear on this point: the risen Christ says plainly to the disciples who had doubted his return that they must go out into the “whole world” (elsewhere translated “to every nation”) and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. This is a call to all Christians to not only gather together in our churches with others of like mind and heart, but as importantly – or perhaps more importantly – to step outside of our structures and (likely) our comfort zones to connect with others and share the news of Christ's gift to humanity.

For me, I am happy to walk near the river and speak to the creatures: “Good morning, beautiful. God sure created you with an eye for grace and color!” I sometimes speak to the breeze or the sun, “Thank you for your warmth... thank you for fulfilling God's intended purpose!” And in the company of other believers and searchers, I will talk about God the creator, Jesus the savior, and the Holy Spirit at work in my daily life. But I fall short – FAR short – of proclaiming the Gospel in the presence of others. Why do I shy away? What am I afraid of? How would I respond if challenged or threatened by authority to hide my faith or to never speak of Christ's purpose? John and Peter, in the first reading, boldly state to the leaders of Sanhedrin who had hoped to silence them: “It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.” Ah, that I would respond with such certainty!!

Christ is at work in my life. This I know. Lent and Easter have given me the opportunity again this year – and more deeply than ever before – to reflect on the promise of life everlasting, and how that promise has been made to me through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. How can I deny it and how can I not willingly, gratefully share it? Perhaps it is time that I should be bold enough to ask God to stop being patient and gracious with me!! In Star Wars, Yoda admonished “There is NO 'try' – there is only 'do'”. I need to exercise in this apostolic effort the same discipline necessary for any other healthy behavior like eating well or moving my body every day. Perhaps this is true for you, also? If so, then today, I invite you to join me in this humble prayer: “Holy God, I ask for your blessing on my journey as a believer and somewhat reluctant apostle, called but unsure of my voice; for your vision so that I might recognize the many opportunities available every day to practice this rusty craft; and, for the grateful heart, passionate spirit and courage necessary to joyfully speak about what I have seen and heard. Amen.”

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