

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, May 10th 2017

It is easy to forget how very busy this time of year can be. The Spring, in the northern hemisphere, creates a long list of tasks in the yard. Students are writing papers and studying for final exams.

Families and friends are preparing for graduation and wedding celebrations. Vacations are being planned. Personally, I have been experiencing a very busy time in my work as the end of the academic year and the beginning of the summer session are always action-packed. This busyness has left me feeling a bit self-absorbed and stressed. The other day I mindlessly switched on the TV and encountered a beautiful documentary about farm workers and an agency that has developed a program to care for the children when the parents work. As the story unfolded I began to feel a sense of calm as I was inspired by the quiet dignity of the families and the bright spirits of the children.

This story came to mind as I pray with today's Gospel from John in which Jesus reminds us that he came into the world as light so that everyone who believes in him might not remain in darkness. When I saw the images of how the exhausted workers lovingly care for their children I heard the voice of God. Yet I realized that I had been so self-absorbed in my own busyness and tiredness, I was not considering the needs of others. In that moment I felt that I moved out of darkness.

My image of God is a kind and caring God. It is so comforting to be reminded by Jesus who says "anyone who hears his words and does not observe them, I do not condemn them for I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world." This message does not give us a pass, but rather holds us accountable to God. Jesus reminds us that he is the human messenger for God who commanded him what to say and speak. When I slow down and pay attention I can easily embrace the words of Jesus.

I reflect upon these questions: How can I be more present to colleagues, family and friends? What are the needs in my community which I can support? Where do I find myself in darkness? How can I clarify a sense of purpose during this busy time of year? In addition to the farm workers in the documentary, who are my role models for living as Jesus teaches us? How does my daily life change when I make time for prayer and reflection?

Today's gospel response is a wonderful centering prayer: I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. This is better than any detailed to-do list.

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