

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jun 14th 2017

When you think of GLORY, is the first thing that comes to mind “holiness”?

For a long time, my association with the concept of “glory” or “glorious” had to do with great beauty, or with spectacle (we use spectacular as a synonym for glorious), or with actions of power, courage, or accomplishment. So, fireworks are “glorious,” or perhaps a sunset, or a painting that takes your breath away, a brilliant military maneuver or even a sung aria or leaping dance step. But I must admit that, for a good part of my own life, the concept of glory did not include the humility of genuine holiness. In fact, however, the root of the word “glory” as we understand it in English is the root for holiness. Authentic “glory” reflects the holiness of God’s self.

The connection that today’s first reading makes between holiness and God’s Being clarifies this source of the word. Paul refers to Moses, who, we understand from the book of Exodus, came down from the mountain, after receiving the law on stone tablets, so filled with glory that no one could look on him. He eventually had to wear a veil over his face because he had seen God face-to-face and was so radiant that an ordinary human could not endure looking at him. (One wonders how Moses, himself, felt about that!) Glory, therefore is the description for what we might say is “God-like.”

Paul insists in this Corinthian passage that if the law of God, written in stone for those trapped in sin, is glorious then how much more is the LIVING presence of the Risen Christ glorious. Those who have been baptized share in that living presence and therefore possess or bear that glory! If we could but see our inner life as it is lighted up – radiant – with God’s Spirit! The ministry that we bear for one another and that flows from Baptism, is radiant, Paul tells the Church of Corinth, and the whole Christian Community today.

In these weeks after Pentecost it is worth spending our time asking Jesus how we share in His mission. What enables us to be more radiant in His glory? If I ask in prayer to see the glory of serving the Mission of Christ, I will begin to attract others to the Good News because of the radiance of love shining forth from my features.

It is no wonder Pope Francis insists that we must live in joy and hope in this life – that is the glory that God gives us to bring others to love and forgiveness. When we know our own glory is unimportant then we give room in our bodies for God’s glory to be revealed!

Eileen Burke-Sullivan-Creighton University's Mission and Ministry