Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jul 27th 2017

Our two readings today relate, in my mind, to the human need to see, touch, feel and experience something for it to be 'real'. The scientist in each of us needs proof, and yet faith calls us to believe what we cannot 'know'.

God understood that the Israelites, having followed Moses for three full months from Egypt, might need some 'evidence' that God was with them and that Moses could be trusted to continue to lead them on their way. And so God became present to them as fire on the mountain, with billowing smoke and thunder. It was a clear and direct message: I am here.

Yet Jesus understood that God would not be making his presence known in such a dramatic and clear way to the many humans spread wide around the earth; he also understood that although God is present and active in our lives, many of us do not choose to see or to hear. We dismiss or explain away the gifts that God bestows - as 'good luck', as the result of where 'preparation and hard work meet opportunity', as expert medicine, as a close call, or as some other rationalization. Jesus knew that he and other humans can best convey Gods work on earth to other humans NOT through clear and direct messages (that others can critique or dismiss), but rather through stories - parables - that share God's teachings of love and 'model the way'.

Matthew 13 tells us that for anyone who has open eyes, ears and hearts, the 'knowledge and mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven has been granted... and more will be given... and s/he will be rich'. So as we read our Bibles and reflect on Jesus' parables or other stories that our fellow humans share regarding the love and presence of God in our lives, we receive richness in grace, in wisdom and in peace. We do not need scientific 'proof' and we do not require fire on the mountain. Rather, we need only our ability to discern through faith to receive the blessing of God's love. May it be yours today.

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