

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Aug 14th 2017

Memorial of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Priest and Martyr

Several weeks ago I had the good fortune to attend a gathering of Ignatian Associates, a lay group committed to apostolic availability, fidelity to the Gospel and simplicity. People came to the Creighton Retreat Center from several Midwest cities. New acquaintances were made and old friendships were fortified. The peaceful setting and beautiful weather supported reflection, prayer and fellowship. We even enjoyed a night of star gazing. Since that weekend I have prayed for the grace to attend to my prayer habits.

As I prayed with today's readings I embraced a form of prayer called Lectio Divina. First I read the scripture slowly and carefully listening for the small, still voice of a passage. Next I pondered that passage attending to what thoughts or memories might occur. And then I gave to God what I found in my heart during this prayer.

I was drawn in by the words of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy and I felt myself going deeper with each reading. There are times I can get stuck in my head rather than listen to my heart so I very much appreciated feeling no pressure to figure things out, but rather just be with God's word.

The passage that stayed with me is: "as God befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So you too must befriend the alien for you were once aliens yourselves."

In my reflection I was grateful for people in our community who have welcomed recent refugees by helping them get safe housing, nutritious food and stable work. Next came images of all of the efforts we on the hosting team for the recent Ignatian Associates Gathering made as we hoped our hospitality would support everyone being fed spiritually during the weekend.

As I continued to pray with this passage I heard God invite me to use my gifts to welcome those entering new situations. We cling to our identities to help us feel safe which can create an "in" group and an "out" group. As the school year approaches I will encounter new students and new colleagues. I will remember how it felt to be have been new and will make the effort to support these students and colleagues in their transition. I will search for opportunities in my neighborhood and community to show God's love to others. And I feel called to be more engaged in welcoming the refugee families who are striving to feel settled in their new homes.

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