

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Aug 22nd 2017

Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Pope John Paul II on the Queenship of Mary

The First Reading tells a story we all have lived in our lives.

No doubt there have been times when we felt like the whole world was against us. Our friends and family may have tried to reassure us that all was not lost, but we just had an in-your-gut-feeling that we knew better and they were just saying so to make us feel better (or maybe to make them feel better so they could leave us alone to wallow in our doubt and misery).

When we begin to doubt ourselves, our goals and dreams look unachievable and soon to fade into the distance. In the worst case scenario, the doubt extends to our faith and we start to feel like Gideon and wonder where is our loving God and why would He let us feel this way? We probably have even imitated Gideon's prayer and said, "My Lord, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?"

The Gospel Reading about the camel passing through the eye of needle is one we are all familiar with and one that probably created some unusual images in our minds when we first read or heard it. (Note, in Jesus' time the "eye of the needle" was the name given to a very narrow passage way in the wall of the city. The opening or eye was large enough for a person on foot to go in and out but if a person was trying to bring a camel loaded with all their worldly possessions through the eye, passage would be impossible.) The Gospel reading tends to parallel the first reading because it, too, talks about doubt with Peter, the rock upon which the church would be built, unsure if following Jesus and his belief in God might have been a career-limiting if not career-ending decision.

Together both passages portray a feeling of uncertainty all of us have likely had from time to time when we feel alone, weak or afraid; or, for the Peters in the crowd, when they realize they will never in a million years make the Forbes 400 chronicling the richest people in America.

So why do we sometimes feel God does not favor us? We pray every day, morning, noon and night, we attend Mass weekly, if not more often, we serve the poor and we give freely of our treasure to those in need. How could He not take notice and see all the good we are doing?

When we feel our faith is being tested, remember that even in our darkest moments He does see and take notice of our actions, and it gives Him great joy to see us living the Gospel, even if that joy does not translate into untold monetary wealth for each of us or mastery and control over all of our daily trials and tribulations.

As you do your Daily Examen of Conscience, focus on the good that has happened to you yesterday and today and not on your unfulfilled wants and desires. See God's presence in these wonderful gifts and be grateful for all, little or large. And as you pray, remember, too, that prayer is made possible through our faith, our trust and assurance in God, for faith comes before our prayers are answered.

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