

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Oct 12th 2017**

Today's Gospel reading reminds me of an image of God my friend Bob calls the Vending Machine God. The image that if we pray enough, tithe enough, do enough good works, repent enough God will not only let us into heaven but he will give us what we ask for. We will get what we want or at least what we need from God. I will not deny the generosity of God or his action and gifts to us. And, I understand how we can fall into this image especially when we read language in scripture like "ask and it will be given." I certainly find myself at times praying with this image of God. But today, my attention was drawn to the end of the Gospel reading where it says "how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" I hear Jesus trying to help us see that God is always with us in great abundance. The Father is giving us Presence, not presents. With the Presence of the Holy Spirit with us, what more could we ask for?

The challenge, as I see it, is to take time to notice, to see how the Holy is present with us – in creation, scripture, Eucharist, prayer, those who cross our paths, our imaginations and dreams, music – just to name a few. God is everywhere and in everything, that is the great gift of God, we are never alone.

I think of the many times recently, amidst the challenges of life and running a retreat center, that I have taken a seat in the sunroom and, unprompted, I am filled with this great sense of love and gratitude. It is a deep knowing more than a thought, that the Holy Spirit is with me in the joys and sorrows, successes and failures of the day. Sometimes I am brought to tears. My response can only be one of love and gratitude in return. Love and gratitude to God but also for and to those around me.

Today, let's take time to notice God's abundance in our lives. Take time to notice and be grateful for the Presence of the Holy Spirit

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