

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Nov 3rd 2017

My birthday is next week but several weeks ago I received a wonderful gift. A dear friend is a visiting professor in our department and was in town to work with our students. The day he arrived we all had the chance to catch up on family news and to complete final preparations for our sessions with the students. So that evening he and I had some quiet time to meet for a beer. As our conversation began my friend said he has been curious to learn more about my journey of faith and he wondered if I felt comfortable sharing with him.

Of course I did! My friend, who was raised in a faith tradition different than mine, embodies social justice and generously shares his gifts with others. It was such a treat to be able to reflect upon and share stories of my faith from when I was a young girl sitting by the Martha and Mary window at St. Thomas Aquinas church to how becoming a mother of daughters impacted my spirituality to where my faith is today. We explored issues around identity and doctrine and a faith that does justice.

For the past several weeks whenever I reflect upon that evening and am filled with gratitude. What a gift to be invited to share the story of my faith journey. And what a gift to have someone carefully and deeply listen to what I have to say. This invitation has helped me further explore my spirituality. The readings today resonate with this exploration.

In the first reading Paul writes to the Romans of his anguish about his acceptance of Christ coupled with heartache about those who have not fully embraced Christianity. While I am generally a positive person, this reading helps me access the times I have been feeling anguish, despair and fear about my faith. In today's Gospel from Luke the Pharisees question the choice Jesus makes on the Sabbath to heal a man suffering from dropsy. This reading reminds me of the many times I have explained or defended my faith. And the times I have not had the courage to do so.

Today I pray with these questions: When do I offer the gift of deeply listening to someone's story? How can I best accompany others in their faith journey? What do I need when I feel anguish or fear? How can I best appreciate the gifts in my life? When do I follow and when do I lead?

"My sheep hear my voice," says the Lord. "I know them and they follow me."

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