

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Dec 16th 2017

Today marks the official end of the Fall semester here at Creighton University. Final exams, papers and projects have been submitted by tired, overextended students. Those same exams, papers and projects are being graded by tired, overextended faculty. Hopefully the spirit of Advent and the anticipation of Christmas has been a focus during these busy days.

When I was elementary school I celebrated the end of the semester with a sleep-over at a family friend's home. Everyone was surprised about the huge blizzard that blew in overnight preventing me from heading home the next morning. While I was safe and comfortable at my friend's home, I was very worried about getting home in time for Christmas. My brother was happy to reassure me over the phone that if I was still snowbound on Christmas he would be willing to open all my presents for me. Needless to say, my response to him was not one of gratitude. Fortunately, my dad borrowed a snowmobile and I got home in plenty of time to celebrate Christmas with my family.

This story came to mind as I read today's first reading from Sirach about the prophet Elijah. He appeared like a fire and his words were like a flaming furnace as he focused on bringing people home, back to the Lord. The sense of purpose from Elijah burns bright like a fire.

While as a young child I was thinking only of myself and my longing for my family (and my Christmas presents). I appreciate the dramatic way my dad came to bring me home. He could have waited until the snowplows did their work, but he wanted his family together all under one roof. Moments such as these from my life can help me understand the powerful message of scripture.

In the Gospel two days ago we heard Jesus tell the crowds that John the Baptist is Elijah. And in the Gospel today Jesus tells the disciples: "Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; but I tell you Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands."

Today I pray for the grace to recognize people in my life who could bring me closer to God. I ask myself to explore times I treat someone as I please rather in the way they should be treated. I reflect upon how I can be inspired by Elijah to share the good news of the birth of Jesus this Advent season. I pray for the awareness to not let a busy schedule and long lists of obligations turn me away from God.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Mary Lee Brock-Creighton University's Department of Interdisciplinary Studies