

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Feb 3rd 2018

“God said, “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.”

It was the summer of 1973. I had just graduated with my degree in art and headed out to the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota, USA, to teach in St. Francis Indian School. My sisters had been in ministry there with the Jesuit community since St. Francis Mission began in the late 19th century. Word had come a few years past that help was needed and I began summer trips as a volunteer beginning in 1970. The timing was perfect. I wanted to minister on an Indian Reservation and the doors opened to that possibility. I knew it was my heart's desire to return some day to teach, live and serve with and among the people on the Rosebud. I prayed for this and in 1973 my prayer was answered.

I moved into a house that was an alternate living option for the girl students, other than the traditional dormitory style facilities. It seemed like a good idea and I enjoyed the students. But, the person in charge was not so easy to live with, lots of stress in the house, questionable behaviors, and I began to wonder, am I in the right place? What am I doing here? What is anyone doing here? Perhaps a moment of trial and testing. I looked to God for guidance in scripture and opened to Solomon's prayer for Wisdom. “Give your servant, an understanding heart...grant me Wisdom.” My heart was certainly with the people. I did move out of the house to the convent, lived with my sisters and stayed for the following four years. Consequently, the house did close and the girls returned to the dorms. In hindsight, perhaps my presence helped to resolve a difficult situation. When I needed to leave St. Francis Mission, to return to my Mother House at Stella Niagara, NY, I left a big part of my heart on the Rosebud.

Solomon's prayer for wisdom is a powerful prayer that helps to put priorities in perspective. It became an anchor prayer over those years and remains so in my life of ministry and service. Where truly is in your heart as you do what you believe God is asking of you? Do you have a prayer that keeps you “anchored” in the deep and helps you to navigate your life?

There are times when we find ourselves in a dilemma and a need for direction or discernment. It is so important to take time in prayer and consider your reality. Time to separate from the busy-ness of daily affairs and perhaps go to a deserted place. The restlessness, tiredness, questions, whatever it is, IS, I believe the Spirit alive and at work within you. What is going on? A need for clarity?

Jesus found himself, again, [as he did in chapter one of Mark's Gospel] the need to set out on a boat, seemingly, the only location to separate himself from the demands of the crowds who followed him, pressed in upon him, needed him to assist them in the circumstances of their human conditions.

Symbolically, we set out into the deep to go deeper, to tap into the silence and listen to God's voice.

We turn to God in prayer for what we need and find that God not only gives us our desire but more! “In addition, I give you what you have not asked for...” O NO! God's gracious mercy may give us a surprise, then, we continually discern and ponder what this all means!

Without doubt, God desires to be in relationship with us. God has a way to keep the conversation

going. Jesus does not want us to be lost without his guidance. “When Jesus disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved...they were like sheep without a shepherd...he began to teach them many things.”

Jesus, with his Apostles recognize the need to rest amidst the demands of their lives. Hopefully, we can find a good night’s sleep, as we say, can help to clear our heads, and awaken to a new day with renewed energy to face what is before us. Whatever is before us, we only need to remember what God has said: “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.”

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