

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jan 3rd 2019

Today's first reading makes the point of the transforming power of God's love. The responsorial psalm reminds us of God's saving power. The Gospel has John foretelling Jesus and it introduces the Holy Spirit.

I am reading "Being Mortal", a book about healthcare for those at the end of their lives. It is not a particularly spiritual book, but the subject matter does build empathy with those in their last months and it does lead one to reflect on one's own life. Rather than my successes, I find myself drawn to recall of the foolish actions in my life. I can recount incidents from childhood through adulthood where I have failed in my mission on this earth. I reflect on the people that I have ignored and those whom I have hurt. I am grateful for a loving God. I am thankful for the strength the Holy Spirit can bring.

I see myself as having a life that is blessed in spite of my stupidity and weaknesses. I do not feel that I have gotten what I deserve, instead I feel myself protected from the world and from my lesser self by God's saving love. I also find myself drawn in empathy to those whose life might not have had similar blessings and having patience with those who might have erred.

This is an interesting time in the liturgical calendar. We are between the gift of Christmas and the revelation of Epiphany. Today's gospel jumps the gun in terms divulging what this gift means. Perhaps a gift isn't appreciated until we recognize its value. My Armenian friends tell me that their main seasonal celebration waits for the Feast of the Epiphany.

My prayer today focuses on gaining direction in this season.

Dear Lord, I come before you as a sinner.

I know of your saving love, yet there are times that I fail to embrace it.

I am aware how brief and how frail our earthly existence can be.

Give me the strength to use my remaining days wisely.

Help me to better respond with empathy to those in need.

Guide me with your love, your grace and your Spirit to experience my epiphanies.

Mike Cherney-Creighton University's Physics Department