

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Apr 22nd 2012

Lectio Divina - Sunday 3rd Sunday of Easter

Read

Luke 24:35 – 48: Having reassured the disciples of the reality of his resurrected presence, Jesus leads them to Bethany and, after blessing them, is taken to heaven. They return to Jerusalem and dedicate themselves to a life of prayer.

Reflect:

Jesus' public life began right after he was found in the temple—the classic place of prayer. Now the disciples return to Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension and are constantly in that same venue, the temple, at prayer.

Pray:

O God, strengthen my determination to pray earnestly and frequently.

Act:

Resolve to take prayer more seriously than you have up until now. Set aside a definite time each day for prayer. If at all feasible, attend Mass daily.

April 23

Monday

When Jesus spoke in today's reading about the "food that the Son of Man gives you" he was speaking (according to most commentators), not yet specifically about the Eucharist, but about his entire "work" – his revelation. But 'revelation' can seem a very abstract word; it can appear to be a mere matter of communicating information. Jesus, however, is the embodied revelation of the Father. He is, as the first verse of John's gospel puts it, "the Word," (logos in Greek). But in Greek, logos means more than what we mean by 'word'. It means meaning, harmony, inner principle... Jesus is all this.

April 24

Tuesday

It is the ordinariness of bread that is so astonishing! Jesus wants to be ordinary for us. “A very precious relic,” wrote Meister Eckhart, “is not willingly allowed to be touched or seen. Therefore He clothed Himself in the cloak of the likeness of bread, just as my bodily food is transformed by my soul, so that no corner of my nature is not united with it... There is not so much as a needle’s point that is not united with it. What I ate a fortnight ago is as much one with my soul as what I received in my mother’s womb. So it is that whoever receives this food purely becomes as truly one with it as my flesh and blood are one with my soul.”

April 25

Wednesday

Mark, Evangelist

“I am the bread of life.” I am what satisfies the deepest and most elemental needs of humanity. I am the most intimate reality in your life: as intimate to you, as sustaining as the food in your mouth. I am the one who keeps your awareness bright like a lamp, your heart warm, your will healthy, strong, and gentle. I am the one who enables you to raise your eyes, to see beauty and glory in the world, and to open the eye of your spirit till you see God.

April 26

Thursday

“Unless the Father draw him!” Commenting on this in the fifth century, St. Augustine wrote: “He did not say lead, but draw. This ‘violence’ is done to the heart, not to the body... Believe and you come: love and you are drawn. Do not suppose here any rough and uneasy violence. It is gentle, it is sweet; it is the sweetness that draws you. Is not a sheep drawn when fresh grass is shown to it in its hunger? Yet I imagine that it is not driven bodily on, but bound by desire. In this way too you come to Christ: do not imagine long journeyings; in the very place where you believe, there you come. For to him who is everywhere we come by love, not by sailing.”

April 27

Friday

“Flesh and blood” means the full presence and reality of a person. “Eat my flesh and drink my blood,” he said. “But, but...” is what we have heard people say through the ages as at the beginning. To eat is to assimilate completely: your food is in your stomach, but on its way to becoming you. We are invited to assimilate deeply the full presence and reality of Christ. When you become knotted up in technical ifs and buts about how Christ is present in the Eucharist, just cut the knot and go back to the basic meaning. Jesus himself gave no explanation when asked.

April 28

Saturday

Many of the intellectual difficulties we have with the Faith come from the fact that we bring the wrong kind of mind to it. The modern world has largely lost the power of symbolic thinking and replaced it with analysis. Analysis in itself is a powerful mode of thought, but it is not the whole of thought.

Even people whose conscious minds are fixed in an analytical mode are still moved unconsciously by symbolism. Our world (especially the world of advertising) is filled with symbols of contentment, pleasure, fulfillment, happiness; and these work on us all, no matter how analytical we may be. We are all the more easily manipulated by symbolism when we do not recognize its reality. Our Faith can withstand analysis, but you cannot live on analysis. “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life” (v. 63).

April 29

Sunday

4th Sunday of Easter

Read

John 10:11-18: The parable of the good shepherd involves faith. The sheep hear his voice and they follow. The good shepherd promises food and security. He knows each by name. He is also the door through which, by faith, they enter.

Reflect:

Do you hear the voice of the good shepherd? Since he knows you by name, does this make you feel good?

Pray:

The good shepherd calls you by name. Pray for the grace to listen to his voice in your daily life.

Act:

Pay attention to names when you meet new people. Learn people's names and use them.

April 30

In the Palestine of Jesus' time, the sheep follow the shepherd, they are not driven from behind like cattle. Jesus often referred to his 'flock.' We are not driven along but rather attracted; we are not feeling before angry shouts but following an encouraging voice. Sheep follow their own shepherd because they recognize his voice. When shepherds meet and sit down to talk, their flocks intermingle, and when they go their separate ways the two flocks separate and follow, never making a mistake. But when a sheep is sick, she will follow just anyone.

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