

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, May 20th 2012

Ascension Sunday - Lectio Divina

Read

- Mark 16:15-20. Jesus gives his disciples the mandate to proclaim the Good News before he returns to the Father in heaven. They went out everywhere to continue the mission of Jesus.

Reflect

- The Risen Lord empowers us to continue his good work on earth. But many are hesitant and hindered by many setbacks. The mandate of the master to evangelize is an imperative and empowering.

Pray

- In your prayer you will discover the presence of the risen Lord. Pray to recognize him in your personal and daily life.

Act

- Look for the presence of the risen Lord in the community of the church, in people close to you, and in people in need. You will find him.

May 21

Monday

REFLECTION

In Old Testament times the great fear was of being scattered as a people; the word “scatter” is used frequently. In the present Gospel text you see a kind of intermediate state: “Scattered, each one went to his home.” But scattering and spreading was soon to be the order of the day. The disciples would be sent out “to the whole world.” Images that Jesus used of the Kingdom were salt, yeast, seeds – all of which are for scattering and getting lost in a greater reality. The Kingdom of God comes to fruition in us when, like Jesus, we become willing to lay down our lives, to give ourselves away.

May 22

Tuesday

REFLECTION

What do you mean by “the world?” This blue planet of ours, with its vast oceans, its beautiful rivers, lakes, and mountains, its countless forms of life, its infinitely precious and stricken human race? No! That is God’s work of art and the place where God’s Word pitched his tent. What John means by “world” is not the physical world but all the power structures in it that are opposed to the coming of God’s Kingdom. We have no choice but to be part of the physical world, but we are called to be drop-outs from all structures that bring death and desolation to humanity. The most complete drop-out from such a “world” is the one who knows “you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

May 23

Wednesday

REFLECTION

The name of God is the presence, the essence of God: God’s holiness. “Holiness” translates the Hebrew word *kadosh*. It meant ‘separate,’ transcendent’. God’s holiness means God’s separation and distance ‘above’ creation. It may seem strange that there is no hint here of love! We Christians want to rush in with “God is love!” But Wait...! What we call ‘love’ can all too easily be just narcissism. We may think we love another (or God) and in reality we may only love a flattering image of ourselves in that person. It is like looking in a magic mirror that improves your appearance. But ‘holiness’ is the ‘otherness’ of the other, his or her mystery. We are to love others (and God) not as projections of our own ego, but in their otherness. While there is still an ego there, there is no love; the ego doesn’t know how to love.

May 24

Thursday

REFLECTION

This passage is a cluster of phrases that express the deepest intimacy; it is impassioned love-language: one, in me, as we are one, one in us, you in me, with me, where I am, that I may be in them... it could be the language of any young man or woman ablaze with love. But it is the language of Jesus speaking with his Father and drawing us with him into the intimacy of their love. Shout it from the rooftops: our God speaks our language! Our God knows and shares our feelings! Our God’s name is Immanuel, “God with us!”

May 25

Friday

7th Week of Easter

Venerable Bede / Gregory VII / Mary Magdalene de Pazzi

REFLECTION

After the trauma of the crucifixion and his own shameful failure in loyalty, Peter is now a humble and broken man. He is deeper, softer, more human. At the first charcoal fire, he had betrayed his greatest friend three times (Jn 18:15ff); at the second charcoal fire he is given a three-fold chance to undo the damage and to profess his love. These two charcoal fires catch the eye in the half-light, and we can never forget their association. Peter, more than anyone, knows his own weakness and the mercy of Christ. He is the head of the new community. Every member of that new community is to learn this new reality: we should be deeper, softer, more human – bathed in the mercy of Christ.

May 26

Saturday

REFLECTION

Long ago, theologians used to distinguish between “curiosity” and “studiosity.” Curiosity is an empty longing for useless information, usually about other people. Curious persons want to know all about you because their own inner life is empty: there is no point to their questions, they are gulping you down like alcoholics. Studiosity (in the old sense) meant an enquiry that had a point, and a bearing on how to live. Our faith is first and foremost a way of life, not some kind of pointless gossip about the beyond. Curiosity wants to know all about the next life while sleep-walking its way through this one. Our faith is practical. And God, it tells us, is practical: what is revealed is “for our salvation.”

May 27

Sunday

Pentecost Sunday

REFLECTION

Read

- John 20:19-23: The Advocate, the Helper, will convict the world in regard to sin, and righteousness, and condemnation. He will speak the truth with authority. The disciples will experience sorrow but their sorrow will change to joy. Jesus will return to the Father but will never abandon them. As he has conquered the world, they will always have reason for joy.

Reflect

- How does the Advocate convict the world in regard to sin, righteousness, and condemnation? Does the Holy Spirit speak to you? Do you listen to the Holy Spirit?

Pray

- When you have problems, remember in your prayer the blessings you have received and thank God for them.

Act

- Talk to someone about the Holy Spirit and explain what the Holy Spirit means to you.

May 28

Monday

8th Week in Ordinary Time

REFLECTION

The impulsive Peter never pulls back. In he comes with a rather crude question! “What is in this for us?” The ‘gospel of wealth’ folks would find his question quite normal! Yet we are in need of everything. Is it ‘selfish’ to expect God to reward us for our efforts? And what of that endless talk about “eternal reward?”

May 29

Tuesday

REFLECTION

Mark shows other people too just as they were. In today's passage, the sons of Zebedee are seen in a rather unflattering light. These, mind you, are going to be the great apostles, James and John. But here they are, asking a question just as crude as Peter's question. They are asking the important places in the Kingdom (in politics it is known as 'jobs for the boys'). But Matthew (20:20) edits the story and has their mother make the embarrassing request! Mothers! What they have to put up with!

May 30

Wednesday

Visitation

REFLECTION

This is the second of two cures of blind men in Mark's gospel. Opening the eyes of the blind was prophesied as one of the works of the Messiah. In fact, in the very next scene, he is being proclaimed by the crowds as Messiah. Gone is the secrecy of before; the 'messianic secret' is out! They are approaching Jerusalem (15 miles away), where the story will reach its climax with his death and resurrection. In Jerusalem many eyes will still be blind to him; or worse, will be watching him with malevolent intent. In the meantime, Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, having received his sight, followed him to Jerusalem. This is a meditation on the different kinds of blindness.

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