

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Apr 20th 2013

It is clear from the first reading that people came to believe upon seeing some extraordinary deeds performed by Peter: the healing of Aeneas and the raising of Tabitha to life. I suppose we too would be moved to trust the word of a person, who can perform such miraculous deeds. But what does one do, when miracles –or at least recognizable miracles– are not at hand?

We seem to long for the miraculous. When life around us seems trite and spiritually deprived of meaning, we travel in search of the extraordinary: we enroll in a pilgrimage to Lourdes, Fatima, Medugorje or the latest purported apparition. No, it is not wrong to follow one's devotion. But are we thus excusing ourselves from seeking God's presence in our daily reality?

A key component of Ignatian spirituality is seeking God in all things. We need the trust to seek God where God is, not where we expect – or would like – God to be. I am afraid that we often fail to recognize God's presence, because we seek God in limited and clearly pre-defined settings and miss seeking God in the ordinariness of our lives. It happened to the Nazareth folks [Lk. 4:16-30], who expected God's presence to be manifested in the mysterious, not in the man they had known as a kid and who had grown up with them. It is the scandal of the ordinary.

Now by definition ordinary is what we experience most often, indeed even daily. If we miss recognizing –or at least seeking– God's presence in the ordinary, we are missing recognizing –or at least seeking– God in most of our life experience.

As rational beings we often think ourselves into a way of acting. But as creatures of habit we can also act ourselves into a way of thinking. If we are in the habit of acting oblivious of being in God's presence, we may easily come to think of God as not present, which would trump any desire or effort to seek God in all things.

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