

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, May 20th 2013

Today's reading from Sirach speaks of Wisdom. Ineffable wisdom.

"...Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor." (Luke 2:52). These are his 'hidden years.' The years scripture only rarely speaks of. The private years of Jesus's youth and childhood. The years of Jesus' maturing intimacy with his Father which took place amid the nurturing supportive intimacy of his family, friends and community.

What little I know about wisdom I have experienced in others. My 96 year-old mother who has lived with us for the past 3 years 'has' what the world calls "dementia". Mom lives in the reality of the moment. She is lured into ongoing creation which surrounds her and all. Every day's sunset is as if the first God created. Mom does not wait for the sunset or anticipate it. However, when she notices it she enthusiastically responds. As one artist to another she delights in the play of light and shadow, vibrant colors, and muted tones of the sky. She is enthralled by wind driven clouds which race and chase across threatening skies. Mom is absorbed in majestic creation. She stands prayerfully awestruck until this gift slips below the horizon or scuttles off to delight equally attentive others. As she is captivated, so am I in her. A mystical experience for each.

What does this have to do with wisdom? I'm not sure.

I asked my mother what was the most significant thing she had learned in her 96 years. After a few moments of what turned out to be contemplative silence she answered, "to wait". Isn't that what Jesus' hidden years were about? A waiting time, a time before he began his public ministry, a time when he "increased in wisdom and age and in divine ...favor". A time when Jesus grew in deeper passionate intimacy with his Father.

What does this have to do with wisdom? I'm still not sure.

The hidden years a sacred space. "They(exiles) long for the place and the people they remember as their own. They suffer from a homesickness caused by too long an absence from all that roots them and gives them their identity." (M.Williams SJ, *The Gift of Spiritual Intimacy* pg 136) Is this not a description of Jesus' years of public ministry and pathway into resurrection? As my mother continues on her path, a path we also walk, she knowingly or unknowingly shares snippets of conversation between her and my father, between her and her two beloved brothers and between her and the "little girl" who at night often stands at Mom's bedside. Mom joyfully invites her into bed, "Can you climb

up here? Come on, get in here, keep those feet warm.” Who is this ‘little girl’ so real, so precious? The world calls this reality hallucination. How different is it from angels who came to Jesus’ aid while he was in the desert? Is it not similar to the angels, messengers sent by the Spirit, to many in scripture? Messengers who invite, who offer insight and wisdom into God’s ways.

What does this have to do with wisdom?

What does any of this have to say about wisdom? I think it has a lot to say about wisdom. Could wisdom be the gift of recognition; to be able to notice and to respond to the presence of God? Oh, to be so wise.

Today’s Good-news: wisdom is another of Creation’s art offered to all, even to me.

(parts inspired by Monty Williams SJ, The Gift of Spiritual Intimacy, 2009)

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