

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 23, 2018

I was very excited to have been given a chance to write on another reflection for a reading. I did one last year in collaboration with my husband who at the time was overseas and it was a great way to stay close to him and reflect on our faith together. So when the opportunity came up again this year, I of course jumped on it. Not knowing which week or set of readings I would be given, it was still going to be another opportunity for my husband and I to work together. The truth of the matter was/is that the first reading threw me for a loop and here is why...

Reading 1 Wis 2:12, 17-20

The wicked say: Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us; he reproaches us and charges us with violations of our training. (In other words he is showing us our true selves and we don't like what we are seeing.) Then it says that we should put him to the test. Then while we're at it, we should also test God as well to see if He will come to his defense. And lastly it says that since we're going this far to test God, let us go all the way to torture him and put him to death. All of this is what Jesus tells his disciples in today's Gospel. So this is what I kept thinking....

Many times, I've heard it said that God knows everything, past and future. This gives us a bit of a glimpse to that truth. But, I was still troubled about the mindset of the people and how they didn't seem to trust in the word. They had been foretold about the coming of the Messiah and they prided themselves in knowing the Torah in detail. Yet even though scripture tells them about Jesus and how he would be treated, the people and even the Disciples could never understand this. It was all there for them to realize the truth. I think that this is the lesson – to hear the truth and to understand why Jesus would give his life for us.

Reading 2 Jas 3:16-4:3

This reading was frustrating too. I read it over and over many times and every time I kept coming up with the same phrase, "Nothing has changed. In two thousand years, humanity is still the same. History just keeps repeating itself." As it is sometimes said, "Doing something over and over the same way and expecting a different outcome is insanity." So, maybe this world is a bit off, don't you agree?

In this reading, we are given the answer to peace and it is not something difficult to find. Everyone has the capacity to love in some form or another. Even the Beatles had it right: All You Need is LOVE. There are some very clever artists out there that keep trying to point it out in songs and poems and stories throughout history, but it seems that it keeps falling on deaf ears. People, especially world leaders, get power hungry with ambitions and they forget that it's the whole world in need and not just their little corner of it.

The other thing that this reading is telling us is that it's important to know how to ask God for his help. Scripture tells us that we are doing it wrong. Although it is important to know HOW to ask for assistance from God, it is just as important to realize that asking God for the wrong things won't get us any happiness either. Our desires lead us to trouble if they are based on selfishness. These selfish desires lead us to conflict with our family, neighbors, and friends and can eventually lead to major problems and even wars.

Gospel Mk 9:30-37

The Gospel is telling us to think about what we should value in life. We should avoid being selfish with our desires. We should be like children who are willing to share our things, time, and space. But unlike a child, God knows what is good for us. God will say "No" if we ask for the wrong things. But, God wants us to care for others like we would for our own children. We must also take care of God's creation to include all people and the world around us. Jesus teaches us that, in God's eyes, it is important to treat everyone with dignity and respect. It is important to love as a child and to know that status and power are not as important as the love and care we have for everyone and our world.

May you all have a Blessed Week!
Jo Ann Nelson