



Come and See!

August 6, 2017

The Word...

Beloved: We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty... You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.
(from 2 Pt 1:16-19)

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
(from Mt 17:1-9)

Pondering the Word...

Peter, James, and John witness the Transfiguration. Peter, overwhelmed, blurts out the first thing that comes to mind: "Ok, this is cool. Let's just stay here and set up camp." "Let's extend this experience as long as we can." He is cut off by the voice of God, and of course, rendered silent by its majesty. Then it is all over and they head back down the mountain to face "the real world" once again.

Most of us have had experiences, spiritual or otherwise, that made it difficult to come back to earth and face day-to-day life. An inspiring retreat or wonderful vacation; even a long anticipated event. We can find ourselves let down or depressed after such experiences if we are not able to "transfigure" ourselves from the inside out and find God in all things— the joyful and the profound, AND the sorrowful and the mundane.

Buddhist author, Jack Kornfield, in his wonderful book, *After the Ecstasy, The Laundry*, has this to say: "Whatever our initial vision of spiritual life, to be authentic, it must be fulfilled here and now, in the place where we live."

Transfiguration takes a willingness to live fully all aspects of our lives. It's a life-long journey of awareness and faith—a journey that begins now.

Living the Word...

If I am waiting to hear God's voice for myself, thundering through a cloud, to tell me exactly what I am supposed to do, I am likely wasting my time. It is the gift of faith—that lamp shining in a dark place—that allows me to benefit from the experiences of my ancestors in faith, confident that their words are not some "cleverly devised myths" (aka, "fake news"). And God's words to Peter, James, and John are very clear: "Listen. Pay attention. Ponder my Son's words and deeds. Learn at a deep, soul-level what it means for you to be my true daughter, my true son. Listen to him."

Spend time this week reading gospel passages that highlight Jesus' words. Pick one or two that move you (or make you uncomfortable or frustrated). Imagine Jesus sitting with you and speaking the words directly to you. What questions do you have for him? Stay with it until "day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart."

Personal Reflections and Ideas: _____

Aug 7: *"Why do you treat your servant so badly?" Moses asked the LORD. "Why are you so displeased with me that you burden me with all this people?"* (Nm 11:4b-15)

This exchange between Moses and God is one of my favorites. Moses has been protective of the people for so long, but finally, he's reached his limit. "God, what did I EVER do to you that you would stick me with such a whiney, uncooperative group?" Perhaps we've heard people say, or have said ourselves, "What did I do to deserve such a fate," as if our actions determine God's "treatment" of us. Perhaps God was waiting for Moses to come to him and admit, "I can't do this on my own." If you're having a hard time coping these days, take a cue from Moses. Turn to God and say, "I need help." But remember, Moses willingly gives up some of his power so the elders can help him. Don't ignore God's help given from the hands and hearts of others.

Aug 8: *Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come."* (Mt 14:22-36)

Peter has been following Jesus for ten chapters now (per Matthew's Gospel) and has witnessed healings, profound teachings, great crowds being fed. It's exhilarating, and while there have been a few disconcerting things, life with Jesus has been exciting to say the least. But now Peter is tested. He so wants to have faith. Jesus calls him yet again to come to him on the stormy sea. We may find ourselves there too. We've been following Jesus faithfully, energized by what we have seen and heard. But then a storm arises in our life. Jesus calls to us to have faith, to allow him to carry us through. Like Peter, we may falter and we may fail. Rest assured: Jesus is always there for us. But be tenacious like Peter, willing to try over and over and over again.

Aug 9: *Our fathers considered not your wonders; soon they forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel.* (Ps 106)

We humans are an impatient lot! It is amazing how quickly we forget, how quickly we ask, "What are you going to do for me today?" I can find myself in the middle of something difficult, asking God to hurry up and deal with the situation (to my liking, of course); or I pray for God's counsel, expecting an immediate and crystal clear answer. That's why I rely on the nightly examen prayer. It's a chance to look back on my day and give thanks for the graces I've received, and for the lessons I learned from the things that challenged me. Each day, consider and be grateful for God's wonders and works.

Aug 10: *"Each must do as determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* (2 Cor 9:6-10)

This is one you just can't fake (as if you can fake anything with God!) You are either giving out of the goodness of your heart, with compassion and mercy, or you are not--you are giving because you are supposed to or you think it's your ticket to eternity. Giving from the heart will always bring joy and happiness. You can't help but be a cheerful giver if your generosity is borne of love. And no, this doesn't apply only to money--your time and talents are often the greatest gifts you can give-- and no, we don't have to give to every cause out there. Identify a few causes or charities that speak to your heart. Focus in on what you can do to bring joy to others. It is the best way to truly bring joy to ourselves.

Aug 11: *"Did anything so great ever happen before? Was it ever heard of? Did a people ever hear the voice of God? Did any god venture to take a nation for himself by signs and wonders, by war, with his strong hand?"* (Dt 4:32-40)

"Did anything so great ever happen before? Did a people ever hear the gentle, loving voice of God calling them by name? Did a people ever see the face of God in an ordinary man? Did any god venture to take on human form and claim all the nations of the world for peace, by signs and wonders, by humility, service, compassion, and love? Did any god die, unwilling to return evil for evil, to show us the way to live?"

Aug 12: *"You shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart and soul and strength. Take to heart these words ... Bind them at your wrist and let them be as a pendant on your forehead."* (Dt 6:4-13)

How do you remind yourself to love God with all your heart? I imagine there are people who've taken Moses literally and have these words tattooed on their wrists! For me, I need more interactive ways--a conscious commitment each morning while I am brushing my teeth to love others; a quiet alarm on my phone at 2 pm to do a mini-examen of my day thus far. Consider what kind of reminder will work for you and give it a try.