



Come and See!

Pentecost, Week of June 5, 2022

The Word...

“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.
They have been saying,
‘Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off.’
Therefore, prophesy and say to them: ‘Thus says the Lord GOD:
O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live...
know that I am the LORD. I have promised, and I will do it...’”
(from Ez 37:1-14)

“And likewise the spirit also gives us aid in our infirmity;
for we do not know what we ought to pray for...”
(from Rm 8:22-27, literal translation)

(Note: Now that we enter Ordinary Time again, we return to the “Come and See “ format until Advent.)

Pondering the Word ...

It’s so appropriate we re-enter “ordinary time” led by the Holy Spirit. God knows we need the blessings of hope and empowerment right now!

I feel like a broken record as sadness upon sadness and tragedy upon tragedy befall us: Extreme weather due to climate change in India. The horrors of war, terror, and gun violence in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Central America, the United States..., and the poverty, starvation, and despair that both climate change and violence inflict upon the innocent. We may feel our bones are dry and our hope is lost. As we hear in Romans, we may not even know what to pray for anymore.

But the promise of the Lord is true. And it is up to us to accept that promise by living and acting in hope. The verse that follows today’s passage from Romans is profound: *“And we know that, for those loving God, all things work together for good to those called according to a purpose.”* We don’t know God’s purposes and we never will. There is much we cannot understand. And we may wish God would just come down here and take care of all this...until we realize...God already has. We must learn to live in peace and respect all life as Jesus taught us.

Living the Word...

There is plenty I don’t understand about how God works –I’m fine with that -- but even more I don’t understand about how some of my fellow Christians think. I cannot comprehend how someone can call themselves “pro-life” and yet continue to support laws and government and business policies and practices, particularly in the US, that are diametrically opposed to life. It boggles my mind. So yes, I pray for those who do not respect life in all its forms, who oppose even commonsense gun laws, who deny climate change. But I am also called to act. Later this week, Jesus tells us – “the salt of earth, the light of the world” -- to stand up and make ourselves known. Don’t dry up. Don’t give up. The Spirit will lead you to live your faith. Don’t ignore your call. Commit to finding one thing you can do to be truly pro-life and affect change.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... _____

Mon, Jun 6: *"One and all were born in her."* (Ps 87) In the Roman tradition, today is the memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church. The "her" in the psalm refers to Zion and that regardless of where someone is born, Jerusalem is their home. Christians have varying views of Mary's role in salvation history, but if we quote Paul from Acts 17:28, "In Christ, we live and move and have our being," then yes, Mary can be mother to all of us! **Reflection/Provision:** This is not theologically correct (nor is it geographically correct that all were born in Zion), but that's not my role! It is a comfort to get to know Mary in a more intimate way. If you are up for a challenge, *Woman Wrapped in Silence*, a long, narrative poem by John W. Lynch, portrays the very human Mary.

Tue, Jun 7: *"Men of rank, how long will My glory be shamed? You love vain things and seek out lies."* (Ps 4, Hebrew) *"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, it is trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world... Just so, your light must shine before others."* (Mt 5:13-16) The verse from Matthew appears right after the Beatitudes. Jesus is speaking to those who feel powerless and trampled upon, not to "men of rank" we hear about in the psalm. Which camp do you belong to? **Reflection/Provision:** In terms of socio-economic privilege, I clearly fall into the "person of rank" category (although I try not to seek out lies and vain things). But I feel powerless to bring about change. Jesus tells me: if I surrender my voice and fail to call out hypocrisy; if I don't shine my light on the good, I fail to glorify God. What will you do today to use your voice, to shine your light?

Wed, Jun 8: *They called out louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears... Then Elijah repaired the altar of the LORD and made a trench around (it), arranged the wood, cut up the young bull, (and thrice poured water) over the burnt offering and over the wood.* (1 Kgs 18:20-39)

First lesson from today's lengthy, humorous passage: it takes a lot of work and sacrifice to get people to see the truth! Second lesson: "By their fruits you will know them." **Reflection/ Provision:** It's important to remember the tribal context of the Old Testament, but the lessons can apply today. Some may try to get their point across through violence, but to no avail – their fruits prove their futility. People of God use patience, perseverance, and prayer – their fruits prove their promise. Is there a challenge you face in trying to get someone to see the truth? First, make sure it is really the truth and not just your version of it – God comes to each of us where and as we are! Second, pray and be patient. Let things come to fruition as God intends.

Thu, Jun 9: *"It is right to praise you in Zion, O God" "To you, silence is praise, God, in Zion."* (Ps 65) I don't know why the Septuagint (Greek) translation of this line is so different from the Masoretic Hebrew. Either way, the psalmist goes on, not in silence but to expound on God's bounty, the majesty of God's earth. I am reminded of Job's words, "My hand I put over my mouth," (40:4) after God enumerates all the wonders of the universe. **Reflection/ Provision:** Have you ever been rendered silent by God's majesty? A beautiful or dramatic scene in nature, beholding a newborn, the somber but intimate departure of a loved one called home? It is true: there are times when the only praise we can give is silence in the presence of God. And it is only in silence that we hear what God wants to say to us. Try to sit in silence today, even for just 10 minutes. Contemplate the wonder of God in the faces of others, in the simple beauty of creation. Then listen.

Fri, Jun 10: *After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.* (1 Kgs 19:9, 11-16) "A sound of minute stillness." "A calm, whispering voice." "A sound of sheer silence." This passage is important to me. It was my invitation back to listening for God, not in the drama, but in silence. Elijah seeks shelter in the same place Moses received the Law, a mountain that has often been shaken by God's presence (Ex 19). Elijah is not humbled by the violence of nature, but by an overpowering calmness and stillness. **Reflection/ Provision:** If you've never experienced this, I highly recommend it. It will change your life. Seek shelter in silence, seek "the peace the world cannot give."

Sat, Jun 11: *It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.* (Acts 11:21-26, 13:1-3) "I was hungry and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you. I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release. I was naked and, in your mind, you debated the morality of my appearance. I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health. I was homeless and you preached to me about the spiritual shelter of the love of God. I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me. Christian, you seem so holy, so close to God. But I'm still very hungry, and lonely, and cold..." (Rev. John Stott, from a prayer by a homeless woman.)