



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 10, 2019

Glimpsing God's Abundance

By Mary Katharine Deeley

In her later years, my mother lived on a lake in Wisconsin, not far from our home. There, our daughters learned to swim and fish. One day, when our younger daughter was about eight, we went to the end of the pier to fish quietly. She had learned to cast her rod after a fashion and was happily doing that when I looked out to where I expected to see the bobber on her line and realized it wasn't there. Just as I started to ask about it, she gave a little yell as her line suddenly took off and she grabbed her rod to hang on. She saw the foot-long

bass jump out of the water a little distance away and her eyes widened. With some help, she got the fish to the pier, where my husband netted it. The amazement of a child who had never caught more than small fish was evident, and she proudly helped clean it for the evening meal.

I can only imagine what the apostles, who were seasoned fishermen, felt that day on the Sea of Galilee, the subject of today's Gospel. Likely it was amazement at this stranger who apparently knew more about fishing than they did, but there was also a glimpse of an abundance they didn't know was possible and a sense that Jesus meant life for them. Peter drops to his knees, suddenly aware of his doubts and sins. Jesus simply tells him not to be afraid, shows him what he can do with God's help, and waits for him to follow. Let's approach the life God calls us to with the same amazement and humility. +

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?" ... "Here I am," I said; "send me!"

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or

1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 11

After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Luke 5:1-11

[Simon said,] "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets."

The apostles likely were amazed at this stranger who apparently knew more about fishing than they did.

A Word from Pope Francis

Let us ask ourselves: How do I follow Jesus? Jesus speaks in silence in the mystery of the Eucharist. He reminds us every time that following him means going out of ourselves and not making our life a possession of our own, but rather a gift to him and to others.

—Solemnity of Corpus Christi, May 30, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I make a practice of offering my doubts and temptations to God?
- When life is difficult, can I use prayer to calm my fears?

Rising From a Spiritual Rut



She was in a rut. As she trudged through the routine, she ticked off the mental litany: Get water, wash dishes, do laundry, cook meals. Then she got nudged out of her rut and into another world. Sound familiar? You may know her by another name: the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4–42).

She may seem like us. The woman at the well follows a worn path, when she is surprised by a stranger. Jesus' request for a drink is preposterous. Even today, Orthodox Jews don't share meals or vessels with those whose dietary practices are less strict than theirs. Furthermore, Jesus comes tired and thirsty to a well without a bucket! Even more shocking, he, who isn't even supposed to talk publicly with a woman, takes a playful tone with her.

Jesus is no lover of ruts. He entered human life in a totally unexpected way—

By Kathy Coffey

born in a stable, not a palace; to young peasants, not royalty. He refused to believe the teachers who protested, "But we've always done it this way!"

Jesus shakes people from their comfy grooves. He broke taboos; he healed and promoted compassion. Blind Bartimaeus gladly gave up his begging routine. Matthew abandoned the daily grind of tax collecting. Jesus startled his disciples, upsetting their calcified notions of holiness. And we who follow Christ, what do we do when we're stuck?

We might search out each day's unique joys. We can find beauty year round: blue shadows on snow, first buds tight as fists, sunlight playing on summer leaves, brassy colors of autumnal harvest. Saint Teresa of Ávila once described the spiritual life as dragging buckets to water a garden (remember, she lived in dry Spain). Then, God's grace comes as rain, disrupting the weary routine.

If we don't take those routines too seriously, we discover that the world doesn't end if we shift them a bit. A regular at the 9 AM Sunday Mass? Try the Saturday afternoon. You may meet old friends you haven't seen in years. For a wild-and-crazy change, attend a different parish! (It might make you appreciate your own.) If Scripture is growing stale, spend time instead with the marvelous spiritual authors writing now.

If your routine has been centering prayer, try praying with music. Or set aside your usual devotions and spend a few silent minutes each day simply

listening for God's whisper. Why cling to practices that fail to nurture? If it's not feeding you, quit doing it—at least for a while. No hard and fast rules restrict how we read, reflect, or pray.

Surely the disciples on the road to Emmaus knew what it was like to be paralyzed in a rut of sorrow and anxiety. When a "stranger" (Jesus) joins them, Luke 24:17 records, "They stopped, looking downcast." Stuck in the ultimate rut of grief, they don't start moving again until Jesus encourages them to share their story. Despite already knowing, he asks what's been happening in Jerusalem. Take note: telling Jesus of our stuck situation is a good first step beyond it.

If we've slid into a rut, we must nurture our deepest selves with whatever we need: a walk, bike ride, latte, book, new shirt, a change of routine, or time with a friend. Self-nurturing may seem "selfish," but we are God's beloved children! God designed our minds, souls, and bodies for stimulation, not stagnation.

God's creation brims with beautiful variety. Maybe it's time to look at the night sky, stroll through a meadow or a botanical garden, taste something new from the produce aisle or farmer's market. *Vive la différence!* +

PRAYER

Lord, you are the Word made flesh. Open my heart to share your message of love and hope with the people around me.

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 11–16

Monday, Weekday:

Gn 1–19 / Mk 6:53–56

Tuesday, Weekday:

Gn 1:20—2:4a / Mk 7:1–13

Wednesday, Weekday:

Gn 2:4b–9, 15–17 / Mk 7:14–23

Thursday, Sts. Cyril and Methodius:


Gn 2:18–25 / Mk 7:24–30

Friday, Weekday:

Gn 3:1–8 / Mk 7:31–37

Saturday, Weekday:

Gn 3:9–24 / Mk 8:1–10

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