



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee

June 2020

The “Ordinary” Way

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St. Augustine (in the Office of Readings) reminds us that there are two “times” during the Liturgical Year: the time before Easter and the time after Easter. These two times reflect the “Paschal Mystery” in our lives. The time before Easter is a time of struggle and penance in faith; the time after Easter is a time of unbounded joy and hope in the promise of our future.

So now we have celebrated the “big” feasts. The Lord has risen and ascended, taking our humble transformed humanness with him to the throne of his Father. They have sent their common Spirit-Gift. The Spirit now dwells and burns like a holy Fire in the midst of the Church. What has Jesus been teaching them – and us – during this precious “time after Easter?”

He has been teaching us, “Now you see me, now you don’t.” He appears when they are together, especially at meals. Then he is gone, breaking the pattern of his former time with them. In former times, he was always visible to them. Now he isn’t. So – he is teaching them that there is now going to be a new “ordinary” way of his presence. He is telling them, and us, that we will need to learn to use our faith to “see” him in a new way. Yes, he has returned to his Father, but no, he has not really left at all. The ordinary way is going to be faith’s way of knowing where to look.

Our coming feasts hold a clue. We will celebrate the Most Holy Trinity, the Body of Christ, and the Heart of Jesus and his mother, Mary. There you have it. That’s where to look. We live, and move, and have our being in the Triune Mystery (like fish in the sea, says Catherine). We are nourished by his very Body and Blood to keep us “becoming what we eat.” And we will find him in our own hearts and in the hearts of others – a way of saying that he will be looking at us out of our deepest love relations.

So we have our challenge before us: we will need to intentionally look for him...around us, in the Breaking of the Bread, in our own deepest heart, and in the hearts of loving people all around us. We will need to see past his disguises...it’s now the “ordinary” way.

You don’t fool me, Lord.
Unless, that is, I let myself be fooled.
I am bonded to you as Word in the Triune Mystery –
where you have carried my very own DNA.
You feed me with your risen self...in your new humanness.
Each time, you kiss me into my own transformation, inch by inch.
And, wonder of wonders, you tell me to look into my own heart –
guilt-laden, selfish, greedy, and egotistic – where you make your home, poor stable that it is.
You haven’t gone anywhere, have you?
You’ve just given us your presence
the “ordinary” way...



Triune God

Special thanks to S. Pat Chaffee for these reflections.

June 7 • Exodus 34: 4b-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13; John 3: 16-18

On the feast of the Most Holy Trinity we come to God as Holy Mystery. “Having come down from a cloud,” God proclaims his name. While most translations hide God’s name under the title Lord, the World English Bible uses the name God in his initial conversation with Moses: Yahweh. I AM. Moses immediately prostrates himself before this One whose name is too sacred to pronounce. One’s name, in Moses’ culture, indicated one’s nature. Yahweh “cries out” his nature: “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.”

Moses, prostrate before this most exalted One, nevertheless, takes him at his word, and asks him to forgive his “stiff-necked people,” and invites him to “come along in our company.” In the Gospel, John gives God the most holy name: Love. “God so loved the world. . .”

June 14 • Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 4b-16a; 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17; John 6: 51-58

Today’s scripture speaks of God’s provision of food and drink during the Israelites’ journey through the desert, and Jesus’s provision of food and drink for our journey of discipleship.

Moses gives the Israelites spiritual meaning to their hunger and the manna that satisfies their physical hunger. This experience, he says, is to teach them that one does “not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” Paul tells us of the meaning of the Eucharist. He reminds us that the loaf is one, shared by many. Thus, the cup of blessing and the bread we break – our participation in the body and blood of Christ – are a sign that “we, though many, are one body.” In John’s gospel, Jesus insists that only he himself can satisfy our hunger for fullness of life. Scholars tell us that the word for eat in this passage means to gnaw, with the hunger and urgency of an animal. So must be our eagerness to be one with Jesus, thus forming his body as we struggle to live as he lived.

June 21 • Jeremiah 20:10-13 Romans 5:12-15; Matthew: 10: 26-33

Each of today’s readings takes us from the rhetoric of despair to the rhetoric of hope – and beyond hope. Poor Jeremiah. He didn’t want to prophesy. He knew it would mean big trouble. And he was right! It was definitely not a good way to find loyal friends. But after a few minutes of hearty self-pity, he remembers God’s promise to be with him. And in the end, he expands his personal comfort to recognize that God’s goodness rescues “the life of the poor from the power of the wicked.” Paul moves from all-encompassing death under the law to all-encompassing life through grace. In Matthew, Jesus cautions his disciples with words of dire possibilities, words like fear, concealed, darkness, whispered, afraid, kill. Then he opens wide the free, expansive flight of sparrows. Of God’s eternally patient love that protects the very hairs of our heads.

June 28 • 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a; Romans 6:3-4, 8-11 Matthew 10:37-42

The woman in Shunem gives generously to Elisha, expecting no return. However, Elisha promises her a son. Jesus promises that whoever gives a disciple a drink of water will be rewarded. But before this promise, he states a more dramatic exchange: “Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” WOW! Lose my life! But I am unlikely to be called to martyrdom. Lose my life. Lose my attachment to resentment for a friend’s betrayal? Lose my preference for passing on gossip that hurts a person’s reputation? Lose my habitually negative attitude?

Lose my self-centered ego? When I do, what freedom I find!