



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee

July 2020

Not so ordinary after all...

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The great feasts are over...Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, Corpus Christ. Liturgically it's a bit like Fourth of July when the fireworks disappear from the night sky. We enter Ordinary Time. Lush green appears on our vestments and in our summer fields. It's the growing time in the North Temperate Zone. Summer is here and the fields are lush with new life.

Truly, this mirrors our grace-lives liturgically. All the wonders of an unspeakable love have been shown to us, and now it is quiet. In the fields of our hearts, much unseen will be going on. The texts will be calling forth growth from the great Mysteries. New life, new growth, new challenges to our cranky old ego with its blaming-shaming-complaining-whining-worrying-withdrawing ways. Oh, yes...our egoism has a voice. We can listen for it. Three ugly sisters and three feverish brothers. They need to be put to "bed" and get a good long healing "sleep."

In their place we welcome joy, cultivate constant prayer, and give thanks, even for what we cannot understand. Then, surprise...! The rich humble earth of our hearts will show new growth! It will appear unbidden...surprising even us. Yes, it is Ordinary Time...but our lives in God are not so ordinary after all.



Holy One,

You have left the scene...or so you have said.

But then you have said too, that you will be with us always.

So you must take your heaven with you wherever you choose to be.

Help me to remember that, when the days are dark...

when the news is bad, when the violence rises, when the virus sweeps away dear ones.

No hair falls from our heads without your knowledge.

Then like that ugly stuff out in the fields, so smelly,

You turn the manure of our lives into marvelous growth and rich food.

Help us to see beyond the darkness, and hear beyond the noise.

Let us hear your voice, Shepherd.

Special thanks to Marge Smith, associate, for these reflections.

July 5: Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8: 9, 11-13; Matthew 11:25-30

The theme today is about being heart humble. “Humble” comes from “humus,” Latin for ground. Today, we might say “right-sized.” Zechariah speaks of a savior who preaches peace, not might. St. Paul tells the Romans that being right sized and in the power of the Spirit will bring new life. No one is immune from suffering, viruses or tragedy. Our fragility is our humility. Jesus, in Matthew’s Gospel proclaims his nature clearly: “I am meek and humble of heart.” Finally, Jesus is THE place we can come to ground! Note: on Thursday, July 9, remember Venerable Augustus Tolton, whose story we have read and have seen portrayed. He was the heart of peaceful reconciliation in a racist society – ours!

July 12: Isaiah 55: 10-11; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23

Today’s readings are for the farmer and gardener in us, a gift many are re-discovering in the pandemic. The themes of seed-sowing and harvest are abundant. For Isaiah, the very best seed is the Word of God. St. Paul describes creation as yearning for new fruit – the Spirit of Good News proclaimed by believers. Jesus did not have an easy life, but He always knew his life was about the will of God and that his life had a purpose. Jesus tells one of His best stories – of the sower and the seed – giving us a purpose and a standard for planting and harvesting the Life given us.

July 19: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43

The planting theme continues. Wisdom discusses preparing us as good ground, balancing justice with kindness, power with clemency. So it is today. We have our issues – health and aging, among other things. Our greatest suffering (our best teacher?) may well be the suffering we see others enduring. That’s our fertile ground, watered with the intercession and fruits of the Spirit. Jesus, in his stories today, shows his remarkable understanding of the gardener’s plight – weeds! He makes us a proposal for hope in the story of the tiniest of seeds (our faith? our smallest action for justice?), which grows by God’s blessing to be a surprisingly impressive plant.

July 26: 1Kings 3:5, 7-12; Romans 8: 28-30; Matthew 13: 44-52

We encounter people embittered because they prayed, and their prayer were not answered. In the reading from 1 Kings, Solomon prays an unusual prayer. Not to win the lottery, to remove his enemies or for a happy, long life. No, Solomon asks for wisdom and understanding that he might do the right thing by his people. God in the story is impressed; He grants that selfless prayer. The Gospel reminds us that the kingdom of God, a treasure in so many ways, is not Amazon Prime! The Kingdom is about choosing to do the next right thing, not having things. Our God did not promise a perfect life or to “fix” everything that is broken. The promise is that God is always with us. Whether life is going well or throwing us a curve ball, God remains with us. Always. Without fail.

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