



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Racine Dominicans
Committed to Truth + Compelled to Justice

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee February 2023

White Martyrdom

By S. Carla Mae Streeter

We are into the short 'Ordinary' Time. The readings are a call to faith in the Word, come to make us whole. Faith is like wearing 3-D glasses. It allows us to see beyond where our reason can go. The Incarnational Mystery has been presented to us. The Word...in whom all things came to be...has married us. We have a bridegroom we cannot see...except in the faces of our brothers and sisters and in our own face in the mirror. Our senses aren't any help. We have to rely on our 3-D faith-lenses.

The Christmas season presented Mary to us as the model of 'pondering.' She pondered what was happening to her. She is an expert in using her 3-D faith-glasses. She believes. She signed a blank check. She never gave in to her doubts...and make no mistake, she was tempted as are we. But she hung on by her fingernails in tough times. She was like a magnet on a refrigerator door. Try to pull it off. Feel the resistance. It knows where it wants to be. So do we. But the storms get pretty wild sometimes.

Faith at times demands a white martyrdom. There is no blood. There is just struggle. It's like we're frozen inside. Nothing seems able to move. We feel like a lump. The doubts swarm about us like bees coming in for the sting. The suggestion is that we are just idiots. There is nothing there...we are beating the air. Prayer is a waste of time. No One is listening. Be not deceived. Nothing can produce only nothing. But, there IS something...! Lots of something...! So...hang on...!

The Greek word for 'believe' as it appears in the Gospels carries a meaning we miss in English. To believe means to adhere to, to cling, as glue does. Maybe that is what the prayer of faith is. We just hang on to God...like glue. Maybe it's just a form of holy stubbornness.

*This faith thing can be like winter...
Cold, frozen, and dark.
Whistle in the dark,
and stick out your defiant tongue
when doubt comes at you like a cold blast.
Someone once said it well:
In the midst of this winter
I discovered in me and invincible summer.
You are my safety.
I will wait for you all my life.*

Thank you to S. Pat Chaffee for this month's reflections.

Sunday, February 5, 2023 | Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isiah 58:7-10, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Matthew 5: 13-16

You are present for this sermon of Jesus. Jesus, in fact, seems to select you for his message. He looks into your eyes. You feel a little uneasy. He says your name; he continues in a voice meant just for you. You are the light of the world. Wait a minute, you think, YOU are the light of the world. He continues: You are the salt of the earth. ME? Excuse me. I'm a nobody. You will bring my light to hearts dark with ignorance, hate, despair, violence. The salt I give you, you will give to a world dying of starvation.

Sunday, February 12, 2023 | Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

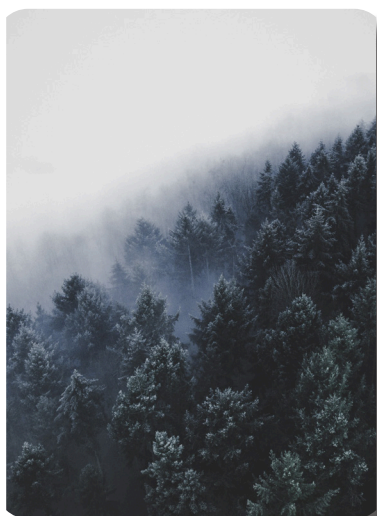
Sirach 15:15-20, 1 Corinthians 2:6-10, Matthew 5:17-37

Today's readings invite us to consider the consequences of our choices. Well, do we really face the dramatic choice presented by Sirach: Before [people] are life and death, good and evil? Jesus has some strong words in answer to this question: Whoever says to his brother [or sister] "You fool" will be liable to fiery Gehenna. So maybe Jesus exaggerates a bit here, but his point is clear. To toss aside love and respect and chose ridicule is to choose death. It is a choice alien to the wisdom not of this age, as Paul preaches. Without sinking into scruples, we can learn to become gradually aware of when we stumble into a choice of life or death.

Sunday, February 19, 2023 | Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18, 1 Corinthians 3:16-23, Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus continues his counter-cultural teaching: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. This is pretty heavy stuff. Yet I knew a couple who forgave the person who killed their daughter, and begged the judge not to give a death sentence. I've heard a talk by an Arab and a Jew, both of whom had lost a child to attacks by the enemy, advocating for fellowship between the two enemies.



Sunday, February 26, 2023 | First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

Led by the Spirit. . .to be tempted by the devil.
Lead us not into temptation. (King James version)

There seems to be a contradiction between Matthew's account of Jesus's retreat to the desert and that of the prayer that Jesus taught us. What, if any, is the connection between the Spirit and temptation? Between the desert and temptation? Between led by the Spirit, desert, temptation, and every word that comes forth from the mouth of God?