



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee October 2022

The Word and the Rosary

It's October, and the chill is in the air. The leaves are preparing for their fall display. The formation in discipleship continues, as the Green Time moves into its last stage. It's also the month of the Rosary, its feast and time to ponder how this scriptural prayer played a key part in keeping the Catholic Community in the Word of God during a difficult time. The printing press had not yet been invented. The bishops alone could preach during the Latin liturgy. The Dominicans were new on the scene about to change that. The question of the day was, "What contact did the faithful have with the Word of God?" The answer was, "Not much...only what they heard if they attended their bishop's liturgy." To make matters worse, 1347-50 brought the peak of the Black Death, a plague that decimated Europe. You guessed it. Folks weren't attending Mass. (Sound familiar?) So, let's go back to the question: "What contact with the Word of God? Little or none." Besides, God must be very angry with all these people dying...so, why pray?



The crusaders had brought back Buddhist prayer beads from the Middle East, and Mary, Jesus' mother, was safe to pray to, so Mary filled the terrible gap. The rosary appeared at this tragic time to give the faithful a link to the Word of God. The number of beads was finally settled as 150, in honor of the Book of Psalms. The Gospel events were assigned to each of the 15 decades, and the faithful learned the Word as the beads slipped through their fingers.

Some of us still find this precious prayer our favorite. Some of us now feast on the Word daily through faithful attention to a pocket lectionary. One way or another, the Word is our daily bread. This month will continue to form us in discipleship: Its first and fifth Sundays dealing with love, with thanks, trust, humility in the weeks in between. Time has passed, but we're still the faithful, and one way or another, we're still being formed in discipleship by the Word.

Wind me round about by your Word...my soul thirsts for you.

Sunday, October 2 | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hab 1:2-3; 2:2-4; 2 Tm 1:6-8, 13-14; Lk 17:5-10

Our readings this week open us to express our faith experience honestly before God. The prophet, Habbakuk, is a great role model for us. He gets angry with God, wondering why God isn't intervening in the midst of ruin, misery, violence, and destruction. We could join him and complete his questions with our own. God, "Why do you _____?" and God, "Why must I _____?" God answers the prophet with hope, telling him the vision "will surely come", and it "will not disappoint." We are reminded that we can be fully human before God — and even question God's motives and our own future. This, too, is faith. What feelings and questions do you need to bring before God with honesty? Say what you need to say, and open to God's response with patience.

Thank you to Tesha Urban for this month's reflections.

Sunday, October 9 | 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kgs 5:14-17; 2 Tm 2:8-13; Lk 17:11-19

In this week's readings, we are introduced to people who are helped and healed by God's faithfulness and grace. In turn, these people recognize where their healing comes from, and they proclaim God's glory for it with gratitude. This is gift enough for God. We, too, are invited to remember all that God has done for us and to give thanks. The Dominican, Meister Eckhardt, believed that "if the only prayer you ever say in your life is thank you, it will be enough." How has God helped and healed you in your life? Reflect upon an experience and share it with someone. Remember God's glory in your lives together!

Sunday, October 16 | 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ex 17:8-13; 2 Tm 3:14-4:2; Lk 18:1-8

If you've been calling out to God day and night — seeking justice and persevering for justice — you're in good company with the widow in this week's gospel. The widow is persistent, and the judge finally gives in and delivers "a just decision for her." God is at work in the engagements we have with decision makers, and God's justice will be restorative. Remain faithful. And remember: Like Moses in this week's reading, you have people on either side of you, supporting you and steadying you. Recognize them. Who are they? Beside whom are you? Reach out to them and proclaim God's sovereignty together. You are in good company.

Sunday, October 23 | 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sir 35:12-14, 16-18; 2 Tm 4:6-8, 16-18; Lk 18:9-14

This week's readings challenge us to set aside self-righteousness and be vulnerable to God and one another. What does it mean to be vulnerable to you? For the tax collector, he brings his humility to the public temple where he admits his sin and asks God for mercy. It's an act of courage and honesty that gives him freedom. I wonder how many people witnessed this and felt inspired to do the same. Is there something you have shared in the past that set you free? Or something you need to share? Maybe you served to witness this for another, and you, too, were transformed. We can lighten our burdens and experience freedom through sharing.

Sunday, October 30 | 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wis 11:22-12:2; 2 Thes 1:11-2:2; Lk 19:1-10

As we conclude our readings this month, we find an exclamation mark that punctuates our faith with encouragement: God's "imperishable spirit is in all things!" When we look for God with curiosity, like Zacchaeus did, we find joy. This joy encourages us to let go of all that holds us back from encountering the fullness of God. In what ways have you opened to encounter the fullness of God — and experienced joy? Take a breath and meditate on Wisdom's words this week: "O Lord and lover of souls — your imperishable spirit is in all things!" Welcome God's visit to the home of your being. Feel God's spirit in you — for you — through you — and all in all!