



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee September 2023

Lifelong Formation

By S. Carla Mae Streeter

The liturgy has only one thing in mind...shaping us up as disciples. The Church has a 'one track mind'...to bring her children closer and closer to her Bridegroom. So September continues the *mystagogy*. We are being instructed on how to deepen the relationship begun in our baptism.

As we enter the first signs of autumn, we are first reminded that it's all about choices. No, not wishful thinking...like "I wish I could lose ten pounds..." It's about a firm act of the will. No 'if's' or 'buts.' This is what I choose, even if I mess up now and then. I choose to follow Jesus.

Then we are reminded of the greatest challenge of all...not to wound love. By the way I think, by the way I speak, by the way I'm silent. Love is that fragile little flower...not to bruise it. Then our texts remind us that this pilgrim walk is not all about 'me.' Growing up is all about getting out of the 'me' bubble, and prayer extends me to the most important 'Other.'

Then there is this 'flesh' thing. Keep in mind that the Greek word is *sarx*, the word for human limitations, not *soma*, the word for body. When Paul says he is still in the 'flesh,' he means he has to put up with all the time/space limitations we all have to put up with. When Jesus says we have to eat his flesh, he meant we have to deal with him in the limits of our brothers and sisters. There's the crunch...yes, it is life-long formation. We are never quite 'done.'

We are halfway through Ordinary Time.

Wise Mother Church does not waste it...

Week by week she gathers us around

and tells us how to keep our eyes on her Beloved.

We are to intentionally choose Him day after day...

We are to guard against wounding love...

We are to think always beyond our little selves...

And we will need to 'stomach' the faults and quibbles, and the limits of our sisters and brothers, just as we hope they daily will put up with me.

Companions in life-long learning.

Thank you to S. Joann Blomme for this month's reflections.

Sept. 3, 2023 | 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer. 20:7-9

You can feel Jeremiah's struggle--his call as God's prophet and his urge to turn away totally. It's "...like fire burning in his heart" and he simply cannot endure it. He can't contend with God right now because he can't find God! What "embers" are burning in you? Just be still to hear the hope that belongs to your call.

Sept. 10, 2023 | 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

PS 95:1-2, Rom.13:8-10

If today you hear his voice, Listen! Hear! You can't go wrong when you love one another, and that's the only obligation we have." Share a time when 2 or 3 of you were together and you were sure God was there with you!

Sept. 17, 2023 | 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

PS 103:1-2; MT 18:21-35

"Today may all my being bless God's holy name!"

The Gospel leaves no real debate about how many times we're called to forgive. About a month ago I received a letter from a woman who borrowed some money from me 7 years ago! She wrote, "I am so sorry, S. Joann. I never paid your money back. I felt you know how hard it is to live here." Yes, I do know. Besides, God's word tells us seven times seventy is not enough. Also, we'll be known as Christ's followers by the love we have for each other.

Sept. 24, 2023 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is.55:6-9; Mt. 20 1-16

God is generous in forgiving. Besides, we read that God is near, unsearchable, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, good, compassionate and just! Our God does not demand exact retribution. What about myself? How tightly do I place judgments or expectations on others' actions or behaviors?

