

HOMILY
7TH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER
LIVING THE GLORY OF GOD
(DEACON RON)

HAVE YOU EVER AFTER A RAINSTORM LOOKED UP IN THE SKY AND FOUND A SERIES OF DIFFERENT COLORS APPEARING IN THE SKY WHICH YOU CONCLUDE AFTER A FEW MOMENTS OF TRACING THEIR SHAPE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT A RAINBOW? AND IN YOUR REALIZATION OF WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT HAVE YOU BEEN AWED BY THE PRESENCE OF IT? HAVE YOU NOT IMMEDIATELY REACHED OUT TO CALL TO OTHERS AROUND YOU TO STOP WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND COME AT LOOK AT THE RAINBOW?

RAINBOWS TO A CERTAIN DEGREE ARE RARE IN THEIR OCCURRENCE GIVEN THE NUMBER OF TIMES IT RAINS AND THEY DON'T OCCUR. AND PERHAPS IT IS THEIR RARENESS THAT MAKES THEIR APPEARANCE SO SPECIAL. PERHAPS YOU HAVE EVEN THOUGHT WHEN YOU SAW ONE ABOUT THE GLORY OF WHO GOD IS IF THIS IS WHAT HE CAN MAKE.

MAHATMA GANDHI WAS KNOWN FOR READING THE NEW TESTAMENT EVERY DAY. HE OFTEN EVEN QUOTED FROM IT IN HIS OWN TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS. ONE DAY A REPORTER ASKED HIM WHY IF HE WAS SO ENTHRALLED WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE TEACHINGS OF Jesus HE HAD NOT BECOME A CHRISTIAN. HE ANSWERED, "IF I HAD MET ONE, I WOULD HAVE BECOME ONE."

CERTAINLY IN HIS TRAVELS AND THE MYRIAD OF PEOPLE HE MET, HE MUST HAVE ENCOUNTERED PEOPLE WHO WERE CHRISTIANS. BUT PERHAPS THE ONES ENCOUNTERED DID NOT MATCH WHAT HE HAD READ A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE OR SHOULD LOOK LIKE. PERHAPS THEY DID NOT REFLECT IN THEIR LIVES, IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH OTHERS, THE GLORY OF GOD WHICH Jesus SUPPOSEDLY BESTOWED ON HIS DISCIPLES.

OUR READINGS TODAY, LIKE A RAINBOW, SHOWS HOW THE COMMUNITY OF CHRISTIANS BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A COMMUNITY CAN REFLECT THE GLORY OF GOD IN THEIR LIVES.

IN THE GOSPEL WE SEE A VERY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE OF Jesus REGARDING HIS CRUCIFIXION. IN JOHN'S GOSPEL ONLY THERE IS NO SCENE OF Jesus PRAYING IN THE GARDEN. INSTEAD THE ONLY PRAYER CHRIST MAKES IS THE ONE HE SPEAKS IN THE LAST SUPPER AND WHICH I HAVE JUST READ TO YOU. HE SEES HIS HOUR OF CRUCIFIXION AS A MOMENT OF GLORY. AS A MOMENT THROUGH

WHICH THE GLORY OF GOD WILL BECOME EVIDENT. FOR IT WILL BE THE PATHWAY TO RESURRECTION AND THE SALVATION OF ALL HUMANITY.

IN AND THROUGH THIS PRAYER Jesus SHOWS HIS COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS, US, IF WE LET GOD USE US, LIFT US UP FOR OTHERS, THEN THE OTHERS WILL SEE THE GLORY OF GOD. BUT WE MUST BE WILLING TO LET GOD USE US. YES, IN A WAY WE HAVE TO GIVE OUR LIVES OVER TO HIM. AS ST. AUGUSTINE SAID “ (WE) PRAY WITH OUR HEARTS, WITH OUR LIPS, (AND) WITH OUR LIVES.”

AND SO WE MIGHT LOOK AT OUR LIVES AND ASK OURSELVES: HOW DOES MY LIFE, MY LIFE WITH MY FAMILY, WITH CO-WORKERS, WITH CO-STUDENTS, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, REFLECT THE PRESENCE OF GOD? THE PRESENCE THAT GOD BRINGS TO US THROUGH OUR FAITH IN GOD.

MATTHEW KELLY, WHO IS A MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER AND AUTHOR, SUGGESTED THAT “IN THIS WORLD OF CULTURAL FATIGUE AND HOPELESSNESS, PEOPLE ARE CRYING OUT TO CHRISTIANS FOR HELP. THEIR PLEA ARISES FROM A DEEP LONGING. THEY WANT TO WITNESS SOMEONE WHO LIVES AUTHENTICALLY, WHOSE LIFE AND CHARACTER MATCHES THEIR WORDS, SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT SURRENDER TO THE STATUS QUO OR MELD IN THE MULTITUDES JUST TO GET BY. THESE SEEKERS OF TRUE CHRISTIANS ARE SAYING, “DON’T JUST TELL ME---SHOW ME.”

AN IMPATIENT DRIVER, NOTICING THAT THE DRIVER IN FRONT OF HIM WAS AN OLDER PERSON, WAS TAILGATING THE CAR IN HOPES OF MAKING IT MOVER FASTER THROUGH THE NEXT LIGHT. HOWEVER THE CAR IN FRONT STOPPED A BIT SOONER THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY AS THE TRAFFIC LIGHT TURNED YELLOW AND THEN TURNED RED. SUDDENLY THE DRIVER OF THE SECOND CAR LEANED OUT HIS WINDOW AND SCREAMED PROFANITIES AT THE DRIVER IN FRONT. A FEW SECONDS LATER A POLICEMAN RAPPED ON THE DRIVER’S WINDOW OF THE SECOND CAR. HE ASKED THE MAN TO STEP OUT AND PUT HIS HANDS UP ON THE CAR. “WHY”, SHOUTED THE DRIVER, “THEIRS NO LAW AGAINST CUSSING OUT SOMEBODY” TO WHICH POLICEMAN RESPONDED “I SAW THE “WHAT WOULD Jesus DO?” BUMPER STICKER OF YOUR CAR ALONG WITH THE CHRISTIAN SYMBOL OF A FISH ON YOUR TRUNK LID, SO I’M ASSUMING YOU STOLE THIS CAR”

THE GLORY OF GOD IS SEEN IN THE FIRST READING TODAY WHEN WE VISUALIZE THAT FIRST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY GATHERED IN THAT UPPER ROOM PRAYING TOGETHER. THEY ARE WAITING WITH PATIENCE FOR THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT WHICH Jesus HAS PROMISED THEM. JUST AS WE GATHER IN THIS ROOM TO PRAY, TO BREAK BREAD TOGETHER, TO PARTAKE OF THE EUCHARIST. WE ARE PRAYING FOR THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT INTO OUR LIVES.

IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRST COMMUNITY IS A VERY SPECIAL PERSON, MARY, Jesus' MOTHER. FROM EARLIEST OF DAYS OF THE CHURCH EVEN UNTO OUR TIME NOW, MARY HAS STOOD WITHIN THE MIDST OF THE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES OF THE CHURCH. AS SHE CARED FOR THOSE IN THAT UPPER ROOM, SHE CARES FOR US TODAY. SHE IS PRAYING WITH US, AND WE ARE PRAYING THROUGH HER TO GOD. SHE ENABLED THAT FIRST COMMUNITY TO BELIEVE THEY COULD BECOME WHAT Jesus HAD ASKED OF THEM AS SHE ENABLES THE CHURCH TODAY TO BELIEVE IT CAN BECOME WHAT Jesus MEANT FOR IT TO BECOME- THE GLORY OF GOD.

SO WE SEE WHAT WE CAN BECOME THROUGH PRAYER. BOTH Jesus'S PRAYER TO HIS FATHER FOR HIS PEOPLE, AND THE PRAYER OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THEMSELVES.

FINALLY IN THE SECOND READING WE ENCOUNTER THE GLORY OF GOD AGAIN. BUT THIS TIME THAT GLORY IS ENCOUNTERED THROUGH SUFFERING.

LAST WEEKEND AND TODAY, IN THIS FIRST LETTER OF ST. PETER'S WE SEE THE SUFFERING THOSE FIRST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY INCURRED FOR LIVING OUT THEIR FAITH AND FOR GIVING WITNESS TO THEIR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY. LAST WEEK PETER EXPLAINS TO THEM THAT THEY MUST ALWAYS BE READY TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY ARE A PEOPLE OF HOPE EVEN IF SUCH EXPLANATION MEANS THAT THEY MAYBE MALIGNED OR RIDICULED. HE WRITES- "IT IS BETTER TO SUFFER FOR DOING GOOD, IF THAT BE THE WILL OF GOD, THAN FOR DOING EVIL". AND IN TODAY'S SECOND READING WE HEAR THAT THE SECTIONS CHOSEN HAVE ALL DEALT WITH SUFFERING AS A PATHWAY TO GLORY- . "REJOICE," THE AUTHOR OF 1ST PETER WRITES, " TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU SHARE IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, SO THAT WHEN HIS GLORY IS REVEALED YOU MAY ALSO REJOICE EXULTANTLY."

SUFFERING IS NEVER EASY IS IT? WHETHER THAT SUFFERING IS FROM PHYSICAL INJURY OR DISEASE, OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS, OR THAT SUFFERING COMES FROM OTHERS BECAUSE OF OUR CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIVING. IN EACH, AS Jesus SAW IN HIS OWN SUFFERING ON THE CROSS, THERE IS THE POTENTIAL, THE POSSIBILITY FOR GLORY GOD TO SHINE THROUGH US. BUT IT WILL REQUIRE SURRENDER TO GOD. AND SO WE MIGHT ASK OF OURSELVES- "WHAT HAS THE SUFFERING IN MY LIFE TAUGHT ME?" TRUST IN GOD OR ANGER AT GOD?

WHEN WE COME TO MASS EACH WEEK WE COME TO CELEBRATE. WE COME WITH OUR HURTS REAL AND IMAGINED, OUR PAINS PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL. WE COME WITH ALL OF OUR BROKENNESS AND SINFULNESS. YET WE COME WITH A DESIRE, A NEED TO CELEBRATE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN WORD AND IN SACRAMENT.

OUR READINGS ASK US TODAY, HOW ARE WE BECOMING IN OUR LIVES, IN OUR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS WHAT WE CELEBRATE HERE. IF WE SEE OUR CELEBRATION HERE IN THIS LITURGY AS THE GLORY OF GOD DESCENDING UPON US, THEN PERHAPS OUR LIVES CAN REFLECT THAT GLORY DESCENDING, THROUGH OUR PRESENCE IN THE WORLD, ON OTHER PEOPLE. OR AS ONE COMMENTATOR SAID- " IF WE LIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE, WE WILL GROW DAY BY DAY, OFFERING BY OFFERING, ACT BY ACT, INTO A FULL PARTNER IN THE GRACIOUS WORK OF Jesus IN OUR SMALL CORNER OF THE WORLD.EACH TIME SOMEONE SEES CHRIST IN US, THE MYSTERY OF HIS CONTINUED PRESENCE IN THE WORLD IS MADE VISIBLE. EACH TIME WE BREATHE LIFE INTO SOME STIFLED OR SUFFOCATING SITUATION WHERE HOPE OR LOVE ARE ABSENT, WE BRING THE GIFT OF GOD'S SPIRIT TO OTHERS. THIS IS WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO."