

Resources for your News

Sunday, 5 March 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Matthew 4:1-11

1. In today's Gospel Jesus is enticed to gratify his own needs, or to perform some spectacular act in public. He rejects the temptation because he chooses commitment to his mission and to dependence on his Father over any immediate gratification. We can all be tempted to go for some immediate satisfaction, but is that where happiness lies? Have you found that sometimes there is more contentment in saying 'no' for the sake of some long-term goal? What are the goals, aims, values that inspire you in this way?
2. One way of looking at this Gospel is to say that Jesus went into the desert to face his demons. We all have demons we need to face – compulsions, fears, prejudices, anger, and urges that lurk within. It is in facing our demons that we find a way to live a fuller life. Can you recall a time when you grew through facing a 'demon' in this way?

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MUSINGS

'One does not live on bread alone ...'

Our real hungers are fed by the meaning and the love of the word of God. One form of prayer is to allow ourselves to be addressed in the heart by the word of God. Let a phrase or word from this passage of Scripture echo in your mind today.

That Jesus was tempted meant that he truly desired what the devil offered him. Of course he was hungry. His body desired what it needed. In what ways might the devil use my legitimate, real desires to lead me astray? Open my eyes, Lord, so that I can recognise temptation when it comes.

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Sunday, 12 March 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Matthew 17:1-9

1. The transfiguration experience was one that, for Jesus, clarified his relationship with his Father and strengthened him for the future. It was also a moment of deep revelation for the disciples. What have been the experiences, the moments of insight, which for you have clarified your sense of who you are, and what is your relationship with God?
2. On the mountain the disciples saw Jesus in a new way. His appearance changed. Sometimes in friendship there are moments of sharing in which we get to know a friend in a new and deeper way. Have you had that experience in human friendship, or in your relationship with Jesus and God. Recall when that happened, and what it was like for you.
3. The clear vision of Jesus with Moses and Elijah was followed by a frightening experience of being in a cloud and it was in the midst of the cloud that the disciples were instructed 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him'. Have you had the experience of learning the truth about life and about your relationship with God from moments of confusion as well as from times of special joy?
4. After their special experience the disciples came down the mountain again. We cannot live each day at the level of special spiritual experiences, but the memory of them can strengthen us in difficult times. What memories encourage you in time of trouble?

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MUSINGS

'Six days later,

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John ...'

Lent is indeed how God draws us home as individuals, but it is also a very communal journey. We never journey alone, no matter how lonely we may feel. We are always journeying together. If we can experience our journey in communion with others, it makes it so much clearer that we are on a journey together. When we can share our experiences with a close friend or our worship community, we can enjoy support that allows grace to flourish. Let us pray for one another on this journey, especially for those who need and desire a change of heart on this pilgrimage to Easter joy. Choosing and acting Lent are so important because we are body-persons. We experience things with our senses, relish them with our imaginations and we share in God's own creative and loving activity when our hearts and hands work together for and with others.

Andy Alexander SJ & Maureen McCann Waldron, Praying Lent.

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Sunday, 19 March 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 4:5-42

1. Jesus leads the woman along a wonderful journey towards a deeper, fuller human life. You can enter the story from the perspective of the woman. Recognise her resistance to growth, her complacency, her evasions, and her eventual acceptance, partial though it was, of Jesus. When have you, or others, made a similar journey in your relationship with God? With others? With your own self?
2. The woman is attracted by what Jesus is saying, but from very human motives: the thought of having water in such a way that she did not have to come and draw it from the well. We too are attracted to Jesus by very mixed motives, some of them matters of personal interest – belonging, community, security. What have been the human motives that have attracted you to faith, prayer, religion, church and which have been stepping stones to a deeper personal relationship with Jesus? Perhaps we can also see the same movement in the growth of some of our human relationships.
3. You can also enter the story with Jesus, the ideal leader, parent, teacher, or spiritual guide. Notice how he meets the woman where she is, needing her assistance; how he is patient with her, but also challenges her to grow to what she is capable of.

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MUSINGS

'A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink" ...'

Who are your friends? What makes you say that they are your friends? You tell them things about yourself that you would not tell a stranger. You know that they will not tell others the secrets you share with them, that they will not hold against you what you tell them or hold it over your head as a threat. At the deepest level, you trust that they will remain your friends even when they know some of the less savoury aspects of your past life and character. You also trust that they will stick with you through thick and thin, through good times and tough times. And at least some of these characteristics will also be true of the relationship God wants with you. What is the most important characteristic I look for in a friend? Can I also find this characteristic in my friendship with God?

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Sunday, 26 March 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 9:1-41

1. A long story like the one we have today provides many different points of entry for prayer. Read the story and stay with what resonates with you. Some possible points of entry are:
 - a. The blind man was healed. Can you recall occasions when some blindness of yours was taken away and you could see in a new way? What was that experience like for you?
 - b. The Pharisees claimed to be the ones who could see, who knew where God was to be found, when in fact they were blind. It was the man born blind who showed himself open to see the hand of God at work in what happened. There can be some of each in us. What has helped you to be open to seeing the hand of God at work in your life? Who have been the Jesus people who have led you to this point?
 - c. There are many characters in the story: Jesus, the blind beggar, the disciples, the neighbours, the blind man's parents, and the Pharisees. Put yourself in the position of each one and see what you learn from identifying with them.

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MUSINGS

'As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth ...'

The opening question of the disciples was, "Who is to blame?" This is a common question in the media today; perhaps it is part of my own vocabulary. Jesus reminds his disciples, and us, that sometimes no one is to blame but that difficult situations present an opportunity for us to be drawn into God's presence.

Lord, there were times I was lost and found, was blind and then could see. Thank you. The man's blindness is cured, but the blindness of those who won't believe in Jesus remains. I think of how I grope, stumble, and am unsure of my direction unless I can rely on Jesus, the light of the world.

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