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19th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 13 August 2023

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13 August 2023

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Angela McCarthy

Introduction

The readings today present an understanding of prayer and the presence of God that is graced upon us for all time. Everything has been given to us and we have only to open ourselves to the gift and hear what the Lord God has to say.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the whisper of the Father. Lord have mercy.

You give us courage to believe. Christ have mercy.

You are God's saving grace. Lord have mercy.

Collect

The Oration

Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
God, for ever and ever.

This prayer is the third collect from the liturgy of Milan to be introduced into the Vatican II inspired revision of the Missal. Nevertheless, though taken from the worship of that city, it is a prayer that was also used in Rome, and probably originated from there. Besides its interesting journey amongst the ancient sources, the prayer has some features of great interest. It is one of the very, very few collects that speaks of God as 'Father'. Even more unusual is its explicit mention of the Holy

Spirit, a rarity amongst the entire genre of collects. In fact, this prayer is a restored version of the Milanese and Roman original: in the 1975 Latin Missal of Paul VI, the reference to the Holy Spirit had been expunged! However, the original prayer related the bringing of hearts to perfection to participation in worship. That original connection remains excluded from our contemporary version.

The oration is richly Pauline, inspired by Rom 8:14-17. Through the presence of the Spirit within them, the baptised are the adopted children of God, their Father. This same Spirit enables the faithful to pray to God as Father, accompanies their prayers to the Father and testifies that these are the prayers of the adopted children. Entry into the promised inheritance is associated with the perfection within them of the spirit of adoption. In the larger context of the prayer's vocabulary and references, their baptism is brought to fulfillment through pure worship, the renewal of their bodies and minds, living out the new life of baptism, and sharing in Christ's sufferings.

Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

1 Kings 19:9, 11-13

Elijah learns that the voice of God is in the silence.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 84:9-14. R. v. 8

Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

If we listen to what the Lord God has to say we can in confidence know that the result will be justice and peace.

Second Reading

Romans 9:1-5

Paul's anguish at the way in which many Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah is expressed in this reading. He would give anything for them to be able to see what God has done but he has to leave it to God in hope that in the end all will be one.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 14:22-33

The frightening experience of Jesus walking on the water helps all the disciples to come to the conclusion that truly, he is the Son of God.

Reflection

Understanding revelation has kept theologians busy for many centuries. How does God reveal Godself to us? As Catholics we know that God is revealed through Scripture but also through our Tradition. Two thousand years of prayer, thought and teaching in faith have yielded understanding that has been passed on to us.

The selections of Scripture today all hold examples of revelation. The full revelation of God is in Jesus, the Christ, through his life, death, resurrection and ascension. We continually celebrate all of these truths in the Eucharist with the Lectionary retelling the stories of how all of this has unfolded.

In the wonderful story from the first book of Kings, Elijah finally reaches Horeb, God's mountain, which is also called Sinai. This is the same place where God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Elijah does not find God in the wind, earthquake or the fire but rather in the gentle breeze (JB). The Hebrew word is difficult to translate so there are variations; the still small voice (KJV), a light murmuring sound (NJB), sheer silence (NRSV).

The psalm sings of God speaking of peace. The psalms are such profound theology for every human state, from despair to boundless joy. The psalms respond in our voice to the revelation of God. The God where mercy and faithfulness meet.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul laments that so many Jews have missed seeing the revelation of God in so many ways and are now unable to recognise the Messiah in Jesus, the Christ.

God has been revealed and yet there are Jews who cannot see what God has done.

Last Sunday we celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration. The reading from the Second Letter of Peter recalled Peter's experience of saying when Jesus was glorified 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour' (2 Pet 1:17). Through Jesus, in his glorified state, God is fully revealed and the authority of God is given to Jesus. Matthew's account (17:1-9) describes the wonderful scene. Peter wants this experience to remain anchored to the earth rather than the heavens and wants to build three tents. Moses and Elijah had also experienced God on the sacred mountain and so it is fitting that they were there when the glory of Jesus is revealed. When the revelation is over, Jesus gets them to their feet and tells them not to be afraid. Afraid of what? Knowing who God is? Knowing that Jesus has all authority from God? Perhaps Jesus is alluding to the final glorious revelation in the resurrection but before then, Jesus must die. This is the hard reality.

In today's gospel Jesus is once again revealed with power and authority. Jesus has just fed the great crowd with only five loaves and two fish. He has shown his authority over natural resources through the blessing of God. Now he sends the disciples ahead in a boat and in the early morning he comes walking to them on the water. Their natural response is one of fear. They had been battling heavy seas and they were already in a state of panic and now Jesus appears in a most unnatural way. The boat has become a symbol of the Church in Christian iconography. It is often tossed on the seas of doubt and mismanagement and panic. We are

experiencing all this within the Church and people have suffered greatly. Will the experience of the Synod on Synodality be a strengthening revelation of Christ's power and love within the Church or will we miss the opportunity?

Peter responds to Jesus' call to come to him but then begins to sink as his fear overtakes him and his faith falters. Jesus reaches out and saves him. Peter understands that truly this is the Son of God. Pope Francis has responded to Jesus' call to lead the Church into difficult waters and trusts that Jesus will be with him all the time.

For us as individuals, revelation takes our whole lifetime and then God is fully revealed once we are born into eternal life. How we receive God's self-revelation is the critical point.

In our lives God is revealed through many different ways. A student once told me that his most profound experience of God was when he was surfing on a good wave and he was totally synchronised with creation. The energy and oneness he felt spoke to him of God. We can see God revealed in the union of husband and wife, an act of love where God is encountered, where the sacrament is known through the oneness and the capacity to create a human being and therefore enter into the life of the Creator. So many speak of the miracle of childbirth, the beauty of beholding the baby and welcoming it in love, into the oneness of family. Beauty, both natural and of human creation, also draws us to God; it moves us and reveals something of God to us.

Our minds alone cannot see God revealed; we have to engage our imagination, all of our senses and emotions so that the presence of God is encountered. Sometimes it is through special interactions with people whose need we can fulfil that we meet the face of Christ. Sometimes it is in our most frail moments when we are most vulnerable. The way we are cared for in those moments reveals the face of God to us through compassion.

God is also revealed to us through Scripture and the teachings of the Church. In the different stages of our lives, we have to open our minds to receive intellectual conversion as well as experiential moments. We must grow in both knowledge and love so that the fullness of God is revealed through Jesus, the Christ.



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Christ fully reveals the love of God to us and so we offer our needs and the needs of our world in prayer.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of our Church as they work together towards the Synod on Synodality. May they be filled with courage and lead us in the love of Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for world leaders. May Christ be revealed to them through the generous behaviours of those who serve their people.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who teach the faith and lead through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. May they be continually inspired through Scripture and liturgical rites to help those on the journey of understanding the way of Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are married and share their faith and love in the image of Christ. May they be enriched through their loving interactions in all aspects of their lives.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who struggle to see Christ revealed. May they experience Christ through loving interactions and interactions with creation and beauty.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who have died that they will now rest in the full revelation of God and come to perfection in love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of all compassion, we offer you these needs with the sure hope that they will be answered in the name of Jesus, our Lord, and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A (13 August 2023)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
All things bright and beautiful			110			
Amazing grace	29				450	437
Be not afraid	114				653	449
Do not be afraid/The Lord is my light		73		593/594	481	28
How can I keep from singing?						454
Like a shepherd	160				538	467
Lord of Creation, to you be all praise				739	543	423
O God, our help in ages past	175			767	568	459
On eagle's wings	153				654	452
Praise the Lord, you heav'ns adore him				790	583	409
Psalm 26(27)				593		
Shelter me, O God						230
The canticle of Saint Francis of Assisi			35			
The Lord's my shepherd	144			833	620	463
We walk by faith	63				641	447
You walk along our shoreline					653	

Title	S&S1	S&S2
Lord, let us see your kindness	71	
Lord, show us your mercy and love		265

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 84: *Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.*

	CWB	JOBA	LPA	PM
Psalm 84	169	p. 84	p. 109	p. 60

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Show us your kindness and love (FWS) *Based on Ps 84/85* [Gifts]

The bread of life (SHOF) [Communion]

One body in Christ (TWB) [Communion]