

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 7, 2022

Be still, be quiet.

Faith- where God begins to be.

All will be well.

-rvb-haiku

Reading 1

Wis 18:6-9

The night of the **Passover** was known beforehand to our fathers, that, with sure knowledge of the oaths **in which they put their faith, they might have courage.**

Your people awaited the salvation of the just and the destruction of their foes.

For when you punished our adversaries, in this you glorified us whom you had summoned.

For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures. In this passage

from Wisdom, the scene is the night of the Exodus from bondage in Egypt.

The fathers refer to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They have placed their

faith in God. This passage is a poem on faith. Whatever happens to human

beings, faith in God assures us that somehow God's saving grace will

prevail. "The night of the Passover was known beforehand to our fathers,

that, with sure knowledge of the oaths **in which they put their faith, they**

might have courage." This passage is the credo of the Jewish tradition in

its unswerving belief in God's love for them and for them to love one another. Rabbi Hillel, who lived in the time of King Herod in Jerusalem, is viewed by historians and scholars as being the originator of the Golden Rule later enunciated by Jesus in Matthew 7:12, this is the whole Torah and everything else is commentary.

Once a heathen came to Rabbi Shammai and said, "I will gladly accept the Jewish faith, provided you can teach me the entire Torah while standing on one leg." When the Rabbi heard these insolent words, he seized his measuring rod and drove the heathen out of his house. The heathen then went to call on Rabbi Hillel and said, "I'll gladly accept the Jewish faith, provided you can teach the entire Torah while standing on one leg." Now just as Shammai was wrathful in his response, Hillel was gentle and understanding. He said to the heathen, 'Do not unto others what you do not wish that others do unto you.' Thus, this is the whole Torah. Everything else is only commentary. Go and learn."-**A Treasury of Jewish Folklore**, Nathan Ausubel.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22

R. (12b) Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Exult, you just, in the LORD;

praise from the upright is fitting.

Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,

the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,

upon those who hope for his kindness,

To deliver them from death

and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Our soul waits for the LORD,

who is our help and our shield.

May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us

who have put our hope in you.

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Reading 2

Heb 11:1-2, 8-12

Brothers and sisters:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for
and evidence of things not seen.

Because of it the ancients were well attested.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place
that he was to receive as an inheritance;

he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country,
dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise;

for he was looking forward to the city with foundations,
whose architect and maker is God.

By faith he received power to generate,
even though he was past the normal age
—and Sarah herself was sterile—
for he thought that the one who had made the promise was
trustworthy.

So it was that there came forth from one man,
himself as good as dead,
descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky
and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures. In this reading from Hebrews, reference is made to the first reading and to the “father” of faith, Abraham. “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place...and not knowing where he was to go.” Note that faith in God makes the development and journey spiritually meaningful and fulfilling. “Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise, when song gives place to sighing, when hope in me dies, I draw the closer to Him, from care he sets me free...for His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches over me daily.” -Anonymous. The initial sentence of this reading is a well-known and often quoted definition of faith speaking to the heart of what it means to have faith as “the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” Trying to define or explain faith can be challenging and illusive; however, here are other attempts to plumb the depth and breadth of the dynamics of faith:

What is the meaning and message of these quotations which are like laser beams penetrating to the heart of one's soulfulness? What is your definition, explanation, or example of faith?

1. "Faith is the touching of a mystery. It is to perceive another dimension to absolutely everything in the world. In faith, the mysterious meaning of life comes through...To speak in the simplest possible terms: faith sees, knows, senses the presence of God in the world." -Alexander Schmemmann, a Russian Orthodox priest.
2. "Faith is not a momentary feeling but a struggle against the discouragement that threatens us faces every time we meet resistance." – Bakole wa Ilunga, a Catholic archbishop in Zaire.
3. "Faith means being grasped by a power that is greater than we are, a power that shakes us and turns us, and transforms and heals us." – Paul Tillich.
4. "Faith faces everything that makes the world uncomfortable – pain, fear, loneliness, shame, death, and acts with a compassion by which these experiences are transformed, even exalted." – Samuel Mueller
5. "True faith can only grow and mature if it includes the elements of paradox and creative doubt. Such doubt is not the enemy of faith but an essential element of it. For faith in God does not bring the false peace of answered questions and resolved paradoxes." -Kenneth Leech
6. "Faith is to bring God back into the world, into our lives...to have faith in God is to reveal what is concealed." -Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel
7. "Faith enables us to perceive the mysterious meanings of life, to live with paradox and contradiction, to confront and overcome obstacles in life, and to be a home where God, the ground of our being, is always present with us and for us."– Anon.
8. "To choose what is difficult all one's days as if it were easy, that is faith." – W.H. Auden
9. "Faith is such a simple thing. It cannot talk, but only sing. It cannot reason, but can dance. Take a chance, Take a chance. Life is full of ways to go. Sun, rain, wind, and snow. All unknowingly we trace a geography of grace. From breath to breath and blink to blink, it is never quite the way you think." – Al Carmines

Alleluia

Mt 24:42a, 44

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Stay awake and be ready!

For you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Lk 12:35-40

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Gird your loins and light your lamps
and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding,
ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.

**Blessed are those servants
whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.**

Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,
have the servants recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.

And should he come in the second or third watch
and find them prepared in this way,
blessed are those servants.

Be sure of this:

if the master of the house had known the hour
when the thief was coming,
he would not have let his house be broken into.

**You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect,
the Son of Man will come.”**

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures. In the Gospel of

Luke, we are to be like the faithful servants as mindful, vigilant, and ready

for the coming of the Lord.

Broaden your attentiveness to God, use a breath prayer or mantra such as, breathing in: God is with and for me, and breathing out: "I am mindful of God here and now." Or, find a song and let the buoyance of the lyrics lift you up, carry you, and renew your soul and send you back into the messiness and fray of daily living with renewed faith, hope, and love. I am suggesting the song "I can see clearly now" a ballad by Johnny Nash.

I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)
Sun-Shiny day.

I think I can make it now, the pain is gone
All of the bad feelings have disappeared
Here is the rainbow I've been praying' for
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)
Sun-Shiny day.

Look all around, there's nothin' but blue skies
Look straight ahead, nothin' but blue skies

I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,

I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)
Sun-Shiny day.

Our faith helps us remain focused, prepared, attentive, ready, and mindful as the Gospel of Luke reminds us: “Let your belts be fastened around your waists and your lamps be burning brightly. “Mindfulness is the practice of aiming your attention, moment to moment, in the direction of your purpose. It is called mindfulness because you must keep your purpose in mind as you watch your attention. Then, whenever you notice that your aim has drifted off, you calmly realign it.” (Frank Andrews)

Spiritual mindfulness is the presence of the moment we bring to the here and now. When we are mindful, we encounter the moment, and we are totally immersed in it. Consequently, we are not aware of the thousand, tiny fingers of distractions, assumptions, biases, prejudices, unconsciousness modalities, and mindless conditioning that imprison us and dulls us. “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” -Corrie ten Boom.

If you pay attention at every moment, you form new relationships to time. In some magical way, by slowing down, you become more efficient, productive, and energized while focusing without distractions on the tasks or human beings who are present to you. “Not only do you become immersed in the moment, more importantly you become the moment.” (Michael Ray – Stanford University School of Business). How often might we say: “Where does the time go?” or “I did not have the time” or “Times flies” as found on the face of grandfather clocks inscribed in Latin as “Tempus fugit.” Consider how much time is lost in waiting in line, attending meetings that drag on beyond the hour, idling at red lights, watching commercials, and reading e-mails.

Mindfulness can help us to be more energy efficient, rather than burning up in the tension and distractions of ordinary mindless living. Here are a series of questions you can mindfully respond to in your everyday lives:

1. What have I been paying the most attention to in my life this past week?
2. What dimensions of my experiences are seeking greater attention?
3. What specific activities do I want to bring greater awareness to?
4. How does becoming more mindful improve the quality of my life, my work, my relations, and my family?

5. What triggers or indicators have reminded me that I have drifted off to mindlessness?

Strive to bring your mind home realizing that the art of cultivating mindfulness is a lifelong process. Thus, be patient and know that every moment is an opportunity to increase your mindfulness of God's presence in your life. "In the Native way, we are encouraged to recognize that every moment is a sacred moment, and every action, when imbued with dedication and commitment to benefit all beings, is a sacred act." (Dhyani Ywahoo)

One evening a husband and a wife were sitting on their back porch after dinner. They had both worked long and hard that day getting in the last of the hay. As many of us are accustomed to doing on a lazy, deliciously cool evening, the man fell asleep snoring in his rocker. As the woman continued relaxing, there happened one of those spectacular sunsets we would all like to capture in a photograph only to discover that the picture does not do justice to the inherent beauty of nature. Thoroughly enjoying the sunset, the woman woke her husband so that he might share in the beauty of this sacred moment. Saying to his wife, "It's just another sunset," the man went back to sleep. "You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

Roger J. Vanden Busch