



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Question the beauty of the earth, the beauty of the sea, the beauty of the wide air around you, the beauty of the sky; question the order of the stars, the sun whose brightness lights the day, the moon whose splendor softens the gloom of night; question the living creatures that move in the waters, that roam upon the earth, that fly through the air, the spirit that lies hidden, the matter that is manifest; the visible things that are ruled, the invisible that rule them; question all these. They will answer you: "Behold and see, we are beautiful." Their beauty is their confession of God. Who made these beautiful changing things, if not one who is beautiful and changes not? (St. Augustine)

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10A

As hurricanes, pandemics, earthquakes, floods, and other disasters hit us, we persevere in faith. We know that a part of creation includes an evolution and shifting of natural matter and that, in a mysterious way, we are a part of this ordered-disorder.

But, Isaiah reminds us that at an appointed time, there will be only order. The veil will be lifted and we will see the world as God intends it to be. On that day, we will cry out and say, "let us rejoice and be glad that He has saved us!"

Question

• Are you able to rejoice and be glad even in this ordered-disordered world?

Commentary

Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

My parents were born about the time of the beginning of the Great Depression. My mother grew up on a small dairy farm in Arizona. They were fortunate to be able to do enough subsistence farming to have food for the family, but any store-bought items were hard to come, such as fabric my grandmother would use to make their clothing.

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

My grandparents were not Catholic, but had a strong Protestant faith in God. Whenever my mother shared stories of the Great Depression she always ended with the line, "We had nothing and we wanted for nothing."

It seemed that God always provided. As a child, she said she didn't realize how poor they were. When my wife and I were first married and had two children we knew what it was like to not have enough money. My wife used to save coins in a jar so that the kids could get penny candy from the ice cream man.

When I talk to our two boys about that time, they said they never knew we were poor. God always provides!

Question

• Can you relate to St. Paul when he says, "I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things. I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need?" If so, please share your story with the group. How did you find trust and reliance in God?

This series in our
Christ in Our Neighborhood program
focuses on celebrating life in all its forms.

Information: dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood

Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

This is a very frustrating parable to understand. I always wonder: Why on earth would anyone refuse to come to the feast of heaven? Not only is the invitation ignored, but even the servants of the king were mistreated and killed. Anyone who has tried to invite others to the feast of heaven knows that the invitation is often ignored, and sometimes those we reach out to reject us and become angry. But we continue to make the invitation because that is what Jesus told us to do.

He said, “not everyone who calls out ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who hear and do the will of God the Father.”

It’s not enough to come before the altar and say “I believe” only to return to a sinful life. It’s not enough to receive the Body of Christ if we don’t become Christ then to those we meet.

We are called to go out to the world and invite others to the feast of heaven. When we receive anger in return, Jesus tells us to wipe the dust from our feet and move on to those who will receive the invitation with joy. Then we will be true disciples of Jesus and be proudly dressed in our baptismal garments in the feast of heaven. In the feast is joy and life in abundance. Go therefore and share the Good News!

Question

- How have you shared the invitation to the feast of heaven with others?
- When you share Jesus with others, have you faced anger or rejection? How did that make you feel, and what did you do?

This Week’s Task

- Look for an opportunity to tell someone about the joy you have in Jesus. If you can, invite them to come to Mass and see.

Group Prayer

We have come to renew our covenant with God and with one another in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

We have come to help protect God’s creation.

We have come as followers of Jesus to commit ourselves anew to one another and to heal injustice and poverty.

We have come to stand together against all threats to life.

We have come to discover some new beauty every day in God’s creation: the sunrise and sunset, birds, flowers and trees, rainbows in the sky, the stars, the many forms of life in the forest.

We have come to listen to the “music of the universe”- water flowing over rocks, the wind, trees bending in the wind, raindrops pattering the roof.

We will remember always that God speaks to us through the beauty of His creation, and we will try our best to answer God’s call to reverence all that He has created. (USCCB Pledge to Protect and Heal God’s Creation)

“Many are
invited,
but
few are
chosen.”

Psalm

Psalm Response: I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures, he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

He guides me in right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Conclude with an Our Father