

Sunday, July 9, 2017

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10

Responsorial: Psalm 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14

2nd Reading:

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Gospel:

Matthew 11:25-30

Following Jesus with New Zeal and Childlike Faith

You have revealed them to little ones. (Matthew 11:25)

Life is an adventure for little children. Give a young boy a toy fire engine, and he'll spend hours putting out a giant fire. Give a young girl a doll, and she'll treat it as her own child. Children are also imaginative. Give them the box from a large appliance, and they'll quickly turn it into a rocket ship, a sports car, or a house. Children also keep things simple. They believe everything their parents tell them. They make friends almost immediately. They give affection freely and without suspicion.

We adults, on the other hand, ask far too many questions. We like to think things through. We weigh the pros and cons of a decision carefully and examine every angle. While that's generally a good thing, too much examination can become a hindrance. This is especially true when it comes to issues of faith. That's why Jesus encourages us to be "little ones" (Matthew 11:25).

Following Jesus should be simple and adventurous as well. For instance, we might try using our imagination in prayer by picturing ourselves in biblical times. We can imagine Jesus as he multiplies the loaves or walks on water. We can cross the Red Sea and journey to the Promised Land with the Israelites. We can place ourselves on the battlefield and witness David slaying the mighty Goliath. Using our imagination this way, we can imitate an inquisitive child and ask all manner of questions: "How can Jesus be everywhere at the same time? What does an angel look like?"

Don't settle for the same old routine! Be bold, and launch yourself on a new adventure. Try this experiment when you're at Mass today. During the Eucharistic prayer, ask Jesus to take you to the upper room with him. Watch as he celebrates the very first Eucharist with his apostles. What does the scene look like? What is Jesus saying to you?

Go ahead and dare to be a child again.

"Here I am, Jesus, ready for a new adventure with you today."

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Questions for Reflection/Discussion by Catholic Men:

1. The first reading opens with these words: “Thus says the LORD: Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.” It goes on to say that this king shall “proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”
 - In what ways has Jesus fulfilled these prophetic words? What parts of these prophetic words remain to be fulfilled?
 - In what way is the Savior’s meekness related to the powerful impact he has on bringing “peace to the nations”?
 - Are there any examples from your own life where you succeeded by meekness instead of power?
2. In the first reading, the Lord also tells us to “Rejoice heartily” and to “shout for joy.” The responsorial psalm begins with these words: “I will extol you, O my God and King, and I will bless your name forever and ever. Every day will I bless you, and I will praise your name forever and ever.”
 - How would you describe the things the Lord has done that should cause all his people to extol, bless, and praise the Lord – their “God and King”?
 - What are some things the Lord has done in your life that would cause you to do this?
3. The responsorial goes on to describe these attributes of the Lord: “The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works. The LORD is faithful in all his words and holy in all his works. The LORD lifts up all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.”
 - How was this Old Testament description of the Lord’s attributes and actions fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ?
 - With whom might the Lord be asking you to respond to by being “gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness”?
4. The second reading, from St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, opens with these words: “You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.” St. Paul goes on to say that “Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.” The reading ends with these words: “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”
 - What message do you think St. Paul is trying to convey with these words?
 - In your life, what “deeds of the body” do you need “to put to death”? How do you think the Lord wants you to do it?
5. In the Gospel, Jesus says that when it comes to revelation, his Father has “hidden these things from the wise and learned,” but he has “revealed them to little ones.” He goes on to say that “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”
 - In what ways does Jesus make the Father known to us?
 - In light of the following words of Jesus, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9), what do you think the Father is like? (Hint: See the attributes of the Lord described in the responsorial psalm.)
 - What specifically can you do this week to better hear from the Lord in prayer, through Scriptures, or at Mass?
6. The meditation tries to unpack the meaning of these words of Jesus: “You have revealed them to little ones.” (Matthew 11:25). It ends with these words: “Go ahead and dare to be a child again.”
 - What do Jesus’ words and these words, “dare to be a child again,” mean to you regarding your relationship with your heavenly Father and Jesus, and the importance of childlike faith?
7. Take some time now to pray that you would experience a new zeal, and a new sense of expectancy and adventure, for what Jesus wants to do in your life. Use the prayer from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

“Here I am, Jesus, ready for a new adventure with you today.

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the **National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal** (<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>) and a member of the board of

As posted on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal National Service Committee’s website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org

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