

Sunday, January 15, 2017

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Responsorial: Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Gospel: John 1:29-34

Seeing Jesus More Clearly, *A Work of the Holy Spirit*

Behold, the Lamb of God. (John 1:29)

Every Sunday, just before we receive the Eucharist, the priest invites us to “Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who takes away the sin of the world.” He invites us to fix our eyes, our hearts, and our whole selves on Jesus. He invites us to say, “This Jesus died for every sin that has been committed or will be committed—he died for every sin that I or anyone else will commit.”

Have you ever seen a story on television about a child who walked into the street and was tragically killed by a speeding car? If so, the story probably left you feeling sad for the child and his family, even though you don’t even know them. But everything would be dramatically different if it were your child who was killed by that speeding car. Instead of feeling sad, you would feel crushed. The pain would stretch on for weeks, months, even years. You might never be able to forget the tragedy.

This is a good way for us to grasp what it means to “Behold Jesus.” Beholding Jesus is not just a good thing to do. It’s not a routine. It’s not just a fleeting moment on Sunday morning in the middle of your busy life. Beholding Jesus involves embracing what Jesus has done for us. It involves remembering what your life would be like without him.

Twice in today’s Gospel, John says, “I did not know him” (John 1:31, 33). Still, John was able to recognize Jesus when he arrived. That’s why he said, “Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God” (1:34). The Holy Spirit revealed Jesus to him in a dramatic and deep way, and it changed his life.

A similar thing can happen to us at Mass today. Jesus wants to open our eyes at the “breaking of the bread” so that we might know him more deeply (Luke 24:35). So when you receive Communion today, make it a point to behold Jesus. Then ask him to reveal himself to you.

“Jesus, you are the Lamb of God. Come, Lord, and open my eyes!”

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission. For more information on how to subscribe to their devotional magazine, go to www.wau.org).

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Questions for Reflection/Discussion:

1. The first reading is the second of four “Servant of the Lord” prophetic oracles in Isaiah pointing to the coming of Jesus. The servant will be a restorer and “a light to the nations” so that the Lord’s “salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” As Catholics, and followers of Christ, we are also called to be a light to others.
 - How do you participate in bringing Christ’s love and light to others?
 - What about someone you know who has fallen away from the Church and Christ? How can you help to bring him back?
2. The responsorial psalm begins with these words: “I have waited, waited for the LORD, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.” He then describes some ways the Lord has answered his prayers: “he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God” and “ears open to obedience you gave me”.
 - How would you describe the ways the Lord has answered you when you cried out to him?
3. The psalmist goes on to say that “to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart.” Once again, he describes what this means to him: “I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.”
 - What parts of the Lord’s will for your life are a “delight” for you?
 - What parts are not a “delight” for you, and what steps can you take to change this?
4. In the second reading, Paul addresses the members of the church at Corinth as those who “have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy,” which means “set apart” for the Lord.
 - Do you see this as your call from the Lord as well? Why or why not?
 - What do you see as the obstacles to this call and how can you overcome them?
5. The Gospel reading speaks of being baptized with (immersed into) the Holy Spirit.
 - How conscious are you during the day that the very life, power, and love of God dwells within you through the Holy Spirit?
 - What are some steps you can take to open yourself even more to this truth, and be more sensitive to the leadings of the Spirit?
6. The meditation describes what it means to “Behold Jesus.” “Beholding Jesus is not just a good thing to do. It’s not a routine. It’s not just a fleeting moment on Sunday morning in the middle of your busy life. Beholding Jesus involves embracing what Jesus has done for us. It involves remembering what your life would be like without him.” The meditation ends with these words: “Jesus wants to open our eyes at the ‘breaking of the bread’ so that we might know him more deeply (Luke 24:35). So when you receive Communion today, make it a point to behold Jesus. Then ask him to reveal himself to you.”
 - What are some ways you can put these words from the meditation into action during the day
 - What are some ways you can put these words into action each time you attend Mass?
7. Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord for the grace to “see” him more clearly and in new ways. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as a starting point.

“Jesus, you are the Lamb of God. Come, Lord, and open my eyes!”

[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 directors of the **Christlife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization** (<https://christlife.org/>). Maurice was also the founding Executive Director of the **National Fellowship of Catholic Men**, for which he is currently a Trustee (<http://www.nfcmusa.org/>). He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org.]