



SUNDAY REFLECTION

A living faith is a faith that questions. God has revealed Himself to us in Israel and in Jesus, but also in the world as seen by our rational minds. God, in other words, makes sense, and this use of our intelligence is key to our faithfulness. So a living faith is a questioning faith. There is a difference between a questioning faith and a doubting faith. Faith, of its essence, is intellectual assent to the proposition that 'Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father', to use St. Paul's words. Once we have given that intellectual assent – the assent that is required of adult

converts before Baptism – we should question. But no longer question whether it is true, but how it is true.

St. John Henry Newman used the distinction when speaking of ‘private judgement’ and the Catholic Church. He was responding to the accusation that to become a Catholic meant leaving his intellect for dead. And he speaks of private judgment as being necessary to take him into the Church, as a lamp is necessary for a man on his journey home through the night. But then, arriving home, to a house full of lights and chandeliers, why keep his lamp burning? And so we too should doubt as we come to faith, but when we’ve conscientiously taken Jesus as the light of the world, what do our doubts count for in the face of His life and His radiant teaching? We question in order to understand this life and teaching more deeply. I seek in order to believe, and in believing more, I am drawn to seek all the more.

This Gospel is endless in its meaning, through all the different details and twists and turns in it. Jesus walks on the waters, and calls Peter to walk on the water like Him, if only he will have faith. Peter, by the power of Jesus, will have power over all the elements of creation, down to that which is most chaotic, the rough and turbulent waters, which are simply like a plaything in His hands – He walks on the waves, up and down, effortlessly, as the rise and fall, and commands them to be peaceful, and they obey. But Peter must not doubt. He has stepped out of the boat in faith, and then he will only sink if, after this remarkable choice, he turns again and doubts. The disciples in the boat, seeing it all, bow down and worship Jesus, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’ And well they might: they have put their finger on the real meaning of this passage. The reference to ‘bowing down’ or ‘worshipping’ Jesus (either translation is equally good) is a favorite of Matthew in comparison to the other Evangelists (Mt. 2:2, 11; 28:9, 17).

But consider this: at the beginning of this Gospel, Jesus goes into the hills to pray alone – at the end the disciples bow down and pray to Him. He is God, and yet we have this beautiful image of Him at prayer, the Son to the Father, as if the Holy Trinity, that love between the Father and the Son that is outside of time, eternal and without beginning or end, present on the hills of Galilee. And then we too, the disciples, live this prayer of Christ to the Father by praying to Him and live this worship of the Father by the Son by worshipping Him.

No greater gift could God have given to men than in making His Word,
By which He created all things, their Head, and joining them to Him
As His members: that the Son of God might become also the Son
Of man, on God with the Father, one Man with men; ... and it is
One Savior of His Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who
Both prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us. He prays for
Us, as our Priest; He prays in us, as our Head; He is prayed to by us, as
Our God. (St. Augustine)

Mother Teresa of Calcutta used to say, ‘There is only one true prayer, one prayer that pierces the heavens, and that is the prayer of the Son of God.’ And we too should remember that when we pray something amazing is happening: it is Jesus Himself who is praying in us, praying for us, and being prayed to by us, because He is God, who has taken us up into Himself in His love, and so as He prays, then our prayers too pierces the heaven.

STEWARDSHIP: Elijah recognized the voice of God not in the strong and heavy wind, not in the earthquake, and not in the fire, but in a tiny whispering sound. May we find enough quiet in our clamorous world to hear His voice and discern what He is calling us to do and be.

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION (DORMITION)

15 AUG '20

CONTRARY TO THE NORM OF OTHER YEARS WHEN THIS FEAST IS a Holy Day of Obligation, that is not the case this year since the feast falls on a Saturday. I suppose I could comment on the rationale of abnegating the obligation at certain times but I will not.

For those who wish to still acknowledge this feast there will be two Masses celebrated:

Friday 14 August 7:00 P.M.

Saturday 15 August 8:30 A.M.



READINGS ASSUMPTION of MARY (DORMITION)

15 AUG '20

Vigil 14 Aug Friday 7:00 P.M.

1 Chron. 15:3-4, 15-16; 16:1-2: The Ark is the religious symbol *par excellence* for the Chosen People of God's presence among them.

1 Cor. 15:54-57: Paul is clear that the victory that can be ours was won for us by Jesus. As the Church's faith developed, belief grew that we ought to honor Jesus' Mother as one already raised in victory to that new life in the company of the risen Lord.

Lk. 11:27-28: Mary not only gave birth to Jesus but also listened to the Word of God and kept it.

Morning Mass 15 Aug Saturday 8:30 A.M.

Rev. 11:19; 12:1-6, 10: The image of the Woman clothed with the Sun has often been applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the Mother of the Lord and her Son has done battle with the forces of evil, which are here represented by the dragon.

1 Cor. 15:20-26: The first sheaf of the harvest was solemnly offered as an act of thanksgiving for the good things of creation. Christ was the first sheaf of the harvest of the resurrection. Mary's Assumption reminds us that we will share like her in the harvest of God's eternal life.

Lk. 1:39-56: Today's disciples are called – like Elizabeth did early on – to recognize Mary and the dignity granted her, who was 'of all women the most blessed. As she greets Elizabeth, Mary spreads the good news of the coming of her son. In her song of praise, she celebrates the joy of that coming, which will be a time of celebration especially for the poor and the humble.

REFLECTIONS FOR SOLEMNITY

The Savior of all, Jesus Christ, was the Son of Mary, and at the end of her life Mary was granted by God the eternal presence of her Son, of the one who had gained salvation for her and for all. From the earliest Christian times there have been traditions, stories and eventually artistic depictions of what the 'Assumption of Mary' might mean.

Mary bore Jesus and stayed very close to her Son – we have no evidence otherwise. She will have been puzzled, at least, by things He said as He spoke openly in synagogues and in the open air, by the sometimes revolutionary suggestions He made about what notions like the 'Kingdom of God' meant, about what was the first commandment of the Law and how from a particular point of view that Law could be set aside. But we understand she remained close to Jesus. In the account found in John's Gospel, Mary is depicted as being there to the end, at the foot of the Cross as her Son died, executed at an early age. And in the Acts of the Apostles, Mary is present still, now in the company of the apostles of Jesus, on the occasion when the gift of the Holy Spirit's fire comes upon them, a fire that sets them alight to speak to the people about the meaning and value of the life and death of Jesus.

Mary is seen by the disciples as being close to them too, as she was close to her Son. She is seen in the Church's tradition as interceding now on our behalf, as she begged her Son (again in the Gospel as told by John) to do something helpful when the wine ran out at a wedding reception in the Galilean town of Cana. And she has been seen and understood as having been honored immediately with welcome to the Paradise where her Son actually awaits all His disciples, in due course.

The Church has not yet reached the end for which the Lord intends it. We are invited still to 'walk' in the Lord, rather than enjoy that 'rest in the Lord' we associate with Mary who was taken up. Hope is about fulfilment: 'Be it done unto me according to Your word', Mary is understood to have said in response to the revelation that she was to be the mother of one who would 'save His people from their sins'. Fulfilment. Our prayer for fulfilment is a prayer that like Mary we can enjoy the immediate presence of Jesus. When the time comes.

Mary is painted in today's Gospel passage as one who responds to God's word, and does so immediately and with generosity. She has been raised into the Lord's presence and is presented as a model for us who still 'walk' in the Lord on *terra firma*.

Isa. 56:1, 6-7: This is a revolutionary reading for the Old Testament. Here, hundreds of years before Christianity, God says, through the prophet Isaiah, that people of all nations will serve the God of Israel and will 'be joyful in His house of prayer'. As we listen to it, let us remember that we are the people the prophet is speaking of.

Rom. 11:13-15, 29-32: St. Paul reminds his Christian readers here, people who were pagans and are now converted as first-generation Christians, that our faith is a gift to us from God, and a sign of God's mercy to us.

Mt. 15:21-28: The faith we profess counts for more in the eyes of God than our identity, as this pagan woman discovers in the Gospel when she wins Jesus' favor by her act of faith in the face of what seems like the silence of God.

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS

DAILY READINGS NINETEENTH WEEK 10 – 15 AUG

Monday 10 August Feast of St. Lawrence, Deacon & Martyr

2 Cor. 9:6-10 Jn. 12:24-26

The liturgical cult of Lawrence is an ancient one in the Roman Church. There are several basilicas dedicated to him in the city. The readings and other texts of the Mass emphasize two features of the attractive legend of St. Lawrence – his generous care of the poor that had been entrusted to him as a deacon of the church and the light-hearted way in which he met his fate as a martyr.

The First Reading was originally part of an appeal to the Corinthian community to be generous in giving to the collection for the relief of the poor Christian communities in Palestine. It has become a call to all who read it to exercise a similar generosity, taking thought only that they will enjoy the same generous care of the one who provides seed for the sower and bread for the eater.

The Gospel is the saying about the fruitfulness of the seed once it has fallen into the earth and died. It is probably the source of the saying of Tertullian that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.'

Tuesday 11 August Memorial St. Clare

Ex. 2:8 – 3:4 Mt. 18:1-5, 10, 12-14

Phil. 3:8-14 Mt. 19:27-29

"Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me."
(Mt. 18:3-5)

How do we become like children? What is the definition of being childlike? Here are a few synonyms that most likely apply to Jesus' definition of becoming like children: trusting, dependent, natural, spontaneous, awe-inspired, without airs, and innocent. Perhaps some of these, or all of them, would qualify for what Jesus is talking about. Let's look at a few of these qualities in regard to our relationship with God and others.

Trusting: Children trust their parents without question. They may not always want to obey, but there is very little reason for children to lack trust that a parent will provide and care for them. Food and clothing are presumed and not even considered as a concern. If they are in a large city, or shopping mall, there is safety found in being close to a parent. This trust helps eliminate fear and worry.

Natural: Children are often free to be who they are. They are not overly concerned about looking silly or being embarrassed. They will often naturally and spontaneously be who they are and not worry about the opinions of others.

Innocent: Children are not yet skewed or cynical. They do not look at others and presume the worst. Rather, they will often see others as good.

Awe-inspired: Children are often fascinated by new things. They see a lake, or mountain, or a new toy and are amazed at this first encounter.

All of these qualities can easily be applied to our relationship with God. We must trust God to care for us in all things. We must strive to be natural and free, expressing our love without fear, not worrying if it will be accepted or rejected. We must strive to be innocent in the way we see others not giving into prejudice and bias. We must strive to be continually in awe of God and of all the new things He does in our lives.

Reflect, today, upon any of these qualities in which you find yourself most lacking. How does God want you to become more childlike? How does He want you to become like children so that you can become truly great in the Kingdom of Heaven?

Lord, help me to become childlike. Help me to find true greatness in the humility and simplicity of a child. Most of all, may I have absolute trust in You in all things. Jesus, I do trust in You.

Wednesday 12 August (St. Jane Frances de Chantal)

Ez. 9:1-7; 10:18-22 Mt. 18:15-20

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the Church. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.” (Mt. 18:15-17)

Presented here is a clear method of problem solving given to us by Jesus. First of all, the fact that Jesus offers a basic method of problem solving reveals that life will present us with problems to be solved. This should not surprise us or shock us. It’s just life.

Too often, when someone sins against us or they live in a publically sinful way, we enter into judgment and condemnation. As a result, we can easily write them off. If this is done, it’s a sign of a lack of mercy and humility on our part. Mercy and humility will lead us to desire forgiveness and reconciliation. Mercy and humility will help us to see others’ sins as opportunities for greater love rather than as reasons to condemn.

How do you approach people who have sinned, especially when the sin is against you? Jesus makes it clear that if you are sinned against you should go to great lengths to win the sinner back. You should spend much energy in love of them and do everything possible to reconcile and to bring them back to the truth.

You must start with a one-on-one conversation. From there, bring other trusted people into the conversation. The ultimate goal is the truth and to do all you can to let the truth restore

your relationship. Only after you have tried everything should you then wipe the dust from your feet and treat them as a sinner if they are not won over to the truth. But even this is an act of love in that it is a way of helping them see the consequences of their sin.

Reflect, today, upon who it is that you may need to reconcile with. Perhaps you have not yet even had that initial personal conversation required as a first step. Perhaps you're afraid to initiate it or perhaps you've already written them off. Pray for grace, mercy, love and humility so that you can reach out to those who hurt you in the way Jesus wants.

Lord, help me to let go of any pride I have that keeps me from being merciful and seeking reconciliation. Help me to reconcile when the sin against me is small or even great. May the compassion of Your heart fill mine so that peace can be restored. Jesus, I trust in You.

You Wicked Servant!

Thursday 13 August St. Pontian Pope & St. Hippolytus

“You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?” Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart.”

(Mt. 18:32-35)

That is definitely NOT what you want Jesus to say and do to you! How frightening to hear Him say, “You wicked servant!” And then to have Him hand you over to the torturers until you pay back all you owe for your sins.

Well, the good news is that Jesus deeply longs to avoid such an awful confrontation. He has no desire to hold any one of us accountable for the ugliness of our sins. His burning desire is to forgive us, pour out mercy, and wipe the debt away.

The danger is that there is at least one thing that will keep Him from offering us this act of mercy. It's our obstinacy in failing to forgive those who have wronged us. This is a serious requirement of God upon us and one we should not take lightly. Jesus told this story for a reason and the reason was that He meant it. We can often just think of Jesus as a very passive and gentle person who will always smile and look the other way when we sin. But don't forget this parable! Don't forget that Jesus is serious about obstinate refusal to offer mercy and forgiveness to others.

Why is He so strong on this requirement? Because you cannot receive what you are not willing to give away. Perhaps that doesn't make sense at first, but it's a very real fact of the spiritual life. If you want mercy, you must give mercy away. If you want forgiveness, you must offer forgiveness. But if you want harsh judgment and condemnation, then go ahead and offer harsh judgment and condemnation. Jesus will answer that act in kind and severity.

Reflect, today, upon those powerfully piercing words of Jesus. “You wicked servant!” Though they may not be the most “inspiring” words to reflect upon, they may be some of the most useful words to reflect on. We all need to hear them at times because we need to be convinced of the seriousness of our obstinacy, judgmentalness and harshness toward others. If that is your struggle, repent of this tendency today and let Jesus lift that heavy burden.

Lord, I do repent of my stubbornness of heart. I repent of my harshness and my lack of forgiveness. In Your compassion please do forgive me and fill my heart with your mercy toward others. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Mystery of Unity in Marriage

Friday 14 August St. Maximilian Kolbe

Ez. 16:1-15, 60, 63 Mt. 19:3-12

“Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh.” (Mt:19:4-6)

What is marriage? Men and women from a young age sense a certain draw to each other. It's part of human nature to experience this. Yes, sometimes this “draw” becomes distorted and turns into lust, but it's important to point out that this natural draw is just that...natural. “From the beginning the Creator made them male and female...” Therefore, from the beginning, God intended the sacred unity of marriage.

Marriage is truly mysterious. Yes, husbands may think their wives are “mysterious” and wives may think the same of their husbands, but in truth each person is a sacred mystery and the unity of two people in marriage is an even greater mystery.

As a mystery, one's spouse and marriage itself must be entered into with an openness and humility that says, “I want to know you more each and every day.” Spouses who approach their marriage with self-righteousness will always look down on the other and always fail to respect the holy mystery of the other.

Each person you get to know, especially your spouse, is a beautiful and glorious mystery of God's creation whom you are not called to “solve” but are called to meet on a deeper and deeper level each and every day. There must always be a humility that enables spouses to be open to the other in a new way every day so that they can continually discover a greater depth of beauty in the other. It is this humility and respect for the other in marriage that enables spouses to fulfill their joint mission of becoming one. Think about it, “they are no longer two, but one flesh.” Very few truly understand what this means and even fewer live the beautiful depths of this glorious and high calling of marriage.

Reflect, today, upon the mystery of the people you are called to love, especially if you are married. To call the other a “mystery” may at first lead to a smile as you acknowledge you cannot figure him/her out. But humbly recognizing the beautiful meaning of “mystery” will lead you to appreciate the uniqueness of others and help you to embrace the call to human unity, especially within marriage.

Lord, help me to see the beauty and holy mystery of the people You have placed in my life. Help me to love them with a humble love. May I especially deepen my love for my spouse each and every day. Jesus, I trust in You.

Saturday 15 August Feast of the Assumption

Reflection found above under the reading for the Holy Day

PRAYERS

Mary the dawn, Christ the perfect day;
Mary the gate, Christ the Heavenly Way!
Mary the root, Christ the Mystic Vine;

Mary the grape, Christ the Sacred Wine!
Mary the wheat, Christ the Living Bread;
Mary the stem, Christ the Rose blood red!
Mary the font, Christ the Cleansing Flood;
Mary the cup, Christ the Saving Blood!
Mary the mother, Christ the mother's Son;
By all things blest while endless ages run.

In Honor of the Assumption

O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and Mother of men.

We believe with all the fervor of our faith in your triumphal Assumption, both in body and soul, into heaven, where you are acclaimed as Queen by all the choirs of angels and all the legions of saints; and we unite with them to praise and bless the Lord who has exalted you above all other pure creatures, and to offer you the tribute of our devotion and our love.

We know that your gaze, which on earth watched over the humble and suffering humanity of Jesus, is filled in heaven with the vision of that Humanity glorified, and with the vision of Uncreated Wisdom; and that the joy of your soul in the direct contemplation of the adorable Trinity causes your heart to throb with overwhelming tenderness.

And we, poor sinners, whose body weighs down the flight of the soul, beg you to purify our hearts, so that, while we remain here below, we may learn to see God, and God alone, in the beauties of His creatures.

We trust that your merciful eyes may deign to glance down upon our miseries and our sorrows, upon our struggles and our weaknesses; that your countenance may smile upon our joys and our victories; that you may hear the voice of Jesus saying to you of each one of us, as He once said to you of His beloved disciple: behold thy son.

And we who call upon you as our Mother, like John, take you as the guide, strength, and consolation of our mortal life.

We are inspired by the certainty that your eyes which wept over the earth, watered by the Blood of Jesus, are yet turned toward this world, held in the clutch of wars, persecutions, and oppression of the just and the weak.

And from the shadows of this vale of tears, we seek in your heavenly assistance and tender mercy comfort for our aching hearts and help in the trials of the Church and of our fatherland.

We believe, finally, that in the glory where you reign, clothed with the sun and crowned with the stars, you are, after Jesus, the joy and gladness of all the angels and of all the saints.

And from this earth, over which we tread as pilgrims, comforted by our faith in the future resurrection, we look to you, our life, our sweetness, and our hope; draw us onward with the sweetness of your voice, that one day, after our exile, you may show us Jesus, the blessed Fruit of your womb, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

(Pope Pius XII)

That one woman is both mother and virgin, not in spirit only but even in body. In spirit she is mother not of our head, who is our Savior Himself – of whom all, even she herself, are rightly called children of the bridegroom – but plainly she is the mother of us who are His members,

Because by love she has cooperated so that the faithful, who are the members of that head, Might be born in the Church. In body, indeed, she is the Mother of that very head.
(St. Augustine, Father and Doctor of the Church)

The reason why Christ is unknown today is because His Mother is unknown.
(St. John Henry Cardinal Newman)

