

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jul 30th 2013

Can you imagine--40 days of face to face conversation with God? That is the experience of Moses, according to today's First Reading. We don't know who was speaking more of the time--God or Moses? The conversation transpired behind a closed tent. What we are told is that at the end of this time, Moses comes out with the "words of the covenant," the Ten Commandments in hand.

This First Reading cries out to be addressed with Ignatian Contemplation prayer, that is, the form of prayer that Ignatius did not invent, but popularized in the Spiritual Exercises. Imagination is a key tool.

To enter into this form of prayer, you need to set aside thoughts that you are not imaginative, that God cannot speak to you through this tool as God does through other tools, e.g. thought, feelings, senses, to name a few.

First, read the entire text, Exodus 33: 7-11; 34: 5-9. 28. Next place yourself in the scene: What do you see? What can you hear? Smell? Feel? Taste? Maybe not so much to taste in this story, though you may be aware that this entire time, Moses neither ate nor drank anything.

Then rewind the story in your mind after inserting yourself into it. When I have prayed this, I have found myself taking the part of a serving girl, totally left out of the action and not happy... Next step: what might God want to say to me through my place in this story?

Christ's explanation of the parable in today's Gospel reading seems to be a favorite theme that Christ uses in many stories: seed that comes to fruition and others that do not. The admonition is to be among those who listen to God's Word and acts accordingly.

What might be keeping us from hearing God's message? We all need to answer this for ourselves. Today the possibilities are endless: lack of quiet/prayer time, contrasting pieces of advice from any number of sources, unwillingness to evaluate those sources by holding them up to the values we hold as Christians and so on.

Hearing God's truth is complicated today and deserves more time and attention than we often give it,

but worth it, "...the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of God." Or we could join the "wailing and grinding of teeth group."

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