

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Mar 4th 2014

The phrase that caught my attention from today's readings is "but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, Be holy because I am holy."

This phrase started a multiple day pondering on what does it mean to be holy. We are all called to be holy, it is not just for the ordained or other "special" group of people. We are all called to holiness.

But what does that mean? As I pondered and researched and asked friends, family and colleagues I started to collect a variety of thoughts. I even began writing them out and trying to find a link amongst them all, but it didn't feel right. Then, I went to the chapel to pray, really to let go of control. Here are my thoughts from that prayer.

I realized that holiness is not a state we hope to attain in this life but a journey of transformation. We can, though, experience holiness in moments of time. Specifically, that holiness can be found in holding the tension of those situations that invite us to think both/and rather than either/or. In addition, holiness can be found in the tension of the more extreme paradoxical situations.

Holiness is found, for example in: giving up to receive, the journey and the destination, following commandments and seeing beyond the rules, fully human and divine, the present moment as eternity, dying bringing new life, obedience leading to freedom, wounded healer, dying to self is to love most fully, first being last and the last being first. We are called to holiness, we are called to be willing to sit in the unknown, unexplained, uncomfortable and to let God be God. This is not a passive sitting. It is an active sitting, looking for guidance for action, looking for God. Yes, in our theme of paradox, sometimes it does mean wait. But, I think mostly, it is like Moses when he went to the mountain top to prayer. When he returned, he was glowing, transformed by God so that now he could bring God's holiness to others.

I would like to share a moment of holiness that I experienced recently at the retreat center and shared in our newsletter.

Recently on one of the very windy days in Iowa, I was sitting in the sunroom of the Manresa Prayer House at the retreat center. The wind was howling and snow flurries were not falling exactly but blowing in all directions. It was very chaotic outside and I was feeling chaotic inside. As I continued to sit, a bluejay alighted in the magnolia tree outside the window. He sat very still in the wind and then suddenly began to call out. He was close enough that I could see him move when he was talking. He stayed for a long time, still and content in the midst of chaos. It was not hard to notice God calling me in creation that day. This moment of grace, of peace in the midst of chaos, moves me forward on my journey to wholeness and holiness. It has invited me to be attentive to the world around me, the person

in front of me and the God within me.

How is God calling you to holiness today?

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