

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jan 8th 2015

These readings got me thinking about journeys. On Sunday we heard about the journey of the Magi, but today we see a different kind of journey. We see that Jesus has journeyed through life itself, and we see him now decades removed from his birth in Bethlehem. He went so far from his humble birth to standing in the synagogue and proclaiming that he was indeed the one that the prophet Isaiah spoke of. THAT is a journey! Each of us is also on a journey through life, one that is a journey of faith.

Our first reading is immediate, concrete, and refreshingly simple. We are not confronted with nuanced theological ideas or grand imperatives of religious doctrine. We are confronted with the person in front of us. Whether it's a spouse, family member, friend, or the checkout clerk at the grocery store, these are the brothers and sisters we are challenged and called to love on a daily basis. This is our "small" journey of faith. Not small because it's unimportant, but because it is made up of small moments that we often wouldn't even give any thought to. This reading reminds us just how important those small, everyday moments are.

The larger journey is important to look at, too. I often trick myself into thinking that I've had the same notions about life and self and God throughout most of my life. Not only is that easier than taking the time to examine it, but this way of thinking also allows me to gloss over the silly things I have believed, thought, and said along my own journey of faith. But I also miss noticing just how much I have grown and changed! Stepping back to look at the big picture of our own individual journeys is important because if we only focus on the small, concrete, everyday moments, we can easily miss a lot of richness that life experience and growth in faith and understanding can offer to us in our relationships with God and with others. On the other hand, focusing only on the grand picture can cause us to think we're healthy, holy people, without even realizing that we're treating those that we interact with on a daily basis with contempt, rudeness, or basically ignoring them, as if their roles in our journeys are insignificant.

So as we move beyond Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany back into Ordinary Time soon, let's not let the time be ordinary, but instead let's continue our journeys of faith in intentional ways and be open to how the large and the small parts can lead us to God.

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