

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jul 20th 2015

Today's Gospel from Matthew begins with yet another verbal attack by "some of the scribes and Pharisees." This time they are pressing Jesus for "a sign."

Never mind that they had already watched his encounters with thousands and seen his many miracles. Of course, we know that generally those that asked this kind of question of Jesus would not choose to recognize signs even if individually pointed out to them.

So it was also in the story of the Israelites' attempts to gain freedom from the Egyptians, a portion of which appears in today's First Reading. God sent increasingly horrific plagues on them even to the killing of their sons. In the effort to make them release those in bondage and recognize His love of the Jewish people and the plan for them which did not include a life of slavery.

I'm curious about the need for "signs." Could that be what Pope Francis is laying out for us in his recently published *Laudato Si, On the Care for Our Common Home*? And an even more compelling question: How serious will be our actions in response?

I have just begun my own reading of the encyclical; I don't expect it to be an easy read. Nevertheless, an essential one. Let's join in a prayer of support and solidarity as we set about the challenge of discovering the "signs of the times" as Francis presents them. And a second prayer that we will be guided in our discernments of needed and possible actions motivated by joy and love also to be found in *Laudato Si*

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