

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Apr 15th 2016

We are perhaps awestruck by the spectacular way the Lord encountered Paul, yet that unique way may not be the most spectacular aspect of the encounter. To me its most striking feature is that it happened while Paul was still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord [first reading], not unlike Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, a rather promiscuous woman at the time of the encounter. Still Jesus chooses that woman to proclaim his message to the town folks and he chooses Paul to proclaim his message to the Gentile world. Being encountered by the Lord meant for them being missioned by the Lord.

In a less spectacular way we too are encountered by the Lord daily. It is true that we do make the baptismal celebration somewhat spectacular, after all it is a celebration. And yet, at least in the case of a baby's baptism, it is only in some seminal way that an encounter takes place at that moment. Certainly God does encounter us in the sacrament of baptism, but it takes years before a baptized baby is capable of corresponding and encountering God.

Every daily encounter, which takes place differently from day to day and from person to person, is a daily being missioned as Paul was, as the Samaritan woman was. Not in a spectacular way, rather while we are "minding our own business," as Paul and the Samaritan woman were "minding their own business".

Today's response to Psalm 177 is: Go out to all the world and proclaim the good news. At the end of every mass the presider tells the congregation: The mass is ended, go; this particular encounter is completed, you are now being missioned to proclaim the Lord with your lives. It is precisely in the very ordinariness of our lives, while we are "minding our own business," that we are called and missioned to proclaim the Lord, not necessarily with words, although they are by no means excluded, but certainly with the witness of our living. Not quite a matter of doing different things, but of doing things ? "minding our own business" ? differently.

Luis Rodriguez, S.J.-Creighton University's Jesuit Community