

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 30th 2016

I am always eager to see my assignments for the reflections and the inevitable connections. It seems that either the readings are exactly what I need to hear at that moment and give them some serious reflection for my well-being or that the date is significant to me and the reflection provides me an opportunity to muse about that happening or event. I know that these are “randomly” assigned, however, today is no different and my connection is very real. On this day, 41 years ago my life was changed forever – my first child, my son Erik, was born. I became a mother with all that motherhood entails – joys, challenges, frustrations, and endless blessings. So it is with that state of mind that I reflect upon these readings and share those thoughts with you all the while smiling about my blessings.

While I was aware that Amos was a prophet, I really did not know much about him, so had to do some additional reading to understand this. Indeed, he was not from a long line of prophets – as he states taken from following the flock and told to prophesy. I’ve read that God inspires the prophets but does not use them as merely a megaphone. Their own styles and personalities come through in their delivery and approach. Amos is clearly one that is conveying doom and gloom without much hope or mercy.

Why have a prophet share such news, such a warning? The only explanation is to give those hearing an opportunity to repent. Unfortunately, although not unexpectedly, the warning is ignored and Amos is probably killed for forecasting such news. I remember thinking in a Bible study class a few years ago that no one ever listened to the warnings of the prophets of the Old Testament and a perpetual cycle was in place: poor behavior, warning, doom, years of suffering, regret, repentance, another chance, poor behavior, warning, doom and so it went. I thought don’t they get it? Just take advantage of the new chance and change permanently – then I looked in the mirror! Do I always get it? Do I heed the warnings (usually the little voice in my head)? I think I have become better with age and as I learn to trust the Lord more and more. The cycle may continue but with shorter times in the negative aspects and quicker realizations about the proper path to take. I am a work in progress and God is not finished with me yet!!

As I read Matthew’s gospel about Jesus forgiving the paralytic, I am reminded of the Old Testament prophets and the reactions they received. The people listening, notably the scribes (the learned, holy ones), doubt the words and question the authority to say such things. How dare the people believe that they faith can change them (without intervention from the scribes)! Yet Jesus is well aware of the doubts and evil thoughts and confronts the scribes in a way they can’t ignore. His command for the man to rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home demands the attention of all as the man did, indeed, rise and go on his way. I wonder how many times we (I) ignore the opportunities for forgiveness and doubt our (my) worthiness or God’s ability to change us (me). If I get my ego out of the way and rest in the knowledge that I am a beloved sinner, my life will reflect the power of God. The essential aspect is that I remember I am both – a beloved child of God and a sinner. Just as my child can’t do anything that would make me stop loving him, so it is with our heavenly Father. I know my child, like me, is not perfect, we both make mistakes. Yet the love never ends He is a Good, Good Father.