

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Sep 23rd 2016

The 'Time' Of Our Lives

In today's reading from Ecclesiastes, I am invited to consider 'time'. There is 'time' for birth and 'time' for death and all that lies in between: 'time' of sickness, 'time' of joys, sorrows, 'time' of trials and tribulations, 'time' of peace, penance, 'time' of mercy and more and more 'time'. What 'time' is my 'time'? Your 'time'? Their 'time'?

Recently our family of five children, 3 children-in-law and 10 grandchildren gathered. It was 'time' to celebrate. To celebrate PopPop's birthday and we did. In truth it was 'time' to celebrate family – which we did in the graced fullness of our humanity! We endured the shrieks of frustrated 2 yr olds trying to be understood or to change the tide of parental discipline. We delighted in the imaginations of our 4 to 9 year olds. Skits, fashion shows, spa ventures complete with finger and toe nail polish (Dads included). En mass we kicked balls, shot hoops, lobbed water balloons, batted a piñata, played charades and lazed around sipping cools drinks with fancy umbrellas. What a 'time', our 'time'!

This 'time' was not all fun and games. Also, 'time' of tiptoeing around scabbed hurts and still oozing wounds. New misunderstandings, unintended slights, and missed opportunities - family patterns are challenging, at best hard to break.

A 'time' for consideration of others: poor, sick, dying, addicted and the growing world wide refugee situation. Each of us personally and as individual families attempting to do what little we could to enter into their 'time'.

In the midst of exuberant chaos, dervish dancing and soft-shoe stepping, healing 'time' gently, mercifully flowed. We came together in the most familiar of activities – washing dishes, folding laundry, sharing the morning paper, working the daily crossword puzzle, taking walks. Soft spoken "good mornings" weary, gentle "good-nights". Older grandchildren nurturing the younger ones. Ragdoll like toddlers gently carried up to bed by uncles and aunties. Older children permitted a starry night's walk around the block – unaccompanied. Sisters sharing late night girl-talk over a glass of wine. Brothers and brothers-in-law in raucous laughter retelling time-worn jokes slipping into softer tones about work and personal challenges. Mother, daughters and daughters-in-law having an afternoon out leaving the dads to "parent, not baby-sit" as the kids say. The ordinary in ordinary 'time'.

Healing 'time' was our 'time'. War, hunger, death and destruction, their 'time'.

Intentional love and tenderness our 'time'. Oversight, forgetfulness and neglect their 'time'. Joy and laughter our 'time'. Bloodshed, swollen bellies and dry eyes their 'time'.

Days flew by, nights slipped away – 'time' to go home. Cousins gleefully shouting and waving 'good-byes' from car windows. Teary eyed brothers and sisters holding each other tightly not knowing when the next 'time' they will be together.

Their 'time' -numberless days, weeks, months, years . 'Time' of birthing and 'time' of dying.

'Time' of not being seen.

My mother-heart beats in joyful gratitude 'time'. My mother-heart weeps in sorrow 'time'. My mother-heart prays, begs in supplication 'time'.

The good-news: no matter the 'time', our God is loving, forgiving and merciful. 'Time' is now. 'Time' is mystery, but all is in God's 'time'. I trust She takes 'time' for you and for me and for all of us. I trust her in all 'time'. I trust in her tender mercy

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