

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Apr 26th 2013

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?”- John

Every morning as I pound the treadmill and listen to NPR, I hear a litany of human misery – of ordinary people caught in civil wars in places like Syria, fleeing to refugee camps to escape shelling or rocket attacks, of women suffering from barbaric treatment etc. Then I look at my comfortable life, thank God for it and ask why me? How did I end up so blessed?

Today’s reading from John supplies no answers but reminds us that much of life will remain a mystery until we get to those dwelling places that Jesus promises he is preparing for us. There’s no way to reason out why one person is born with the proverbial silver spoon and another lacks life’s necessities but faith can help us take a longer view of our fate in life.

No one escapes life without facing some major challenges or even some catastrophes. When life is falling apart, it’s hard not to ask God “why me?” even though we know there are no answers. We can’t even rig the game by praying more, or doing more volunteer work etc. One of the most devout people I have ever known is in a wheel chair. Happily we no longer believe that physical difficulties are God’s punishment for sin.

We somehow have to learn to trust Jesus’ promise that eventually all of life’s mysteries will be resolved when we reach those heavenly dwelling places.

My wish for all of us today is that whether we are in a wonderful place in life or suffering through an awful episode or illness, that we will have the faith to let go and to let God. It’s hard to surrender control but, as today’s Gospel tells us, the only way to live is by faith.

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