

1.15.23: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Every morning around sunrise, when the sky starts to turn pink and gold and blue, a large flock of seagulls fly east towards the the sunrise. It's not an organized formation like geese, and they don't seem to be in any rush to get to their destination, they seem to be enjoying the morning commute on the wing with their family and friends. And then in the evening the reverse happens. My presumption is they are going back and forth between lakes in the area. They get to enjoy the Birds Eye view of our beautiful Oklahoma sunrises and sunsets every day. Every day, twice a day they fly towards the beautiful light.

Some people we know people are like that, they seem to know how to redirect our thoughts back toward the light. Whether they help us to see the bright side of things or shine a different perspective on how we see something, it just feels refreshing how they lift the heaviness of the moment just enough to catch another breath. These are John the Baptist people. And we can all be one.

In today's gospel John points to the light. He says behold the Lamb of God. John the Baptist was not a Baptist. But he was a baptizer who was Jewish. In Jewish culture there were a number of different cleansing rituals. Baptism was one of them.

The Catholic Church says that Baptism is the beginning of our salvation. When we are baptized the light of Christ enters our soul. The more time we spend in light the brighter the light within us grows. Christ was born around the winter solstice when the days begin to get longer. Light begins to grow day by day. Johns feast day is the summer solstice when the days begin to grow shorter and darker.

John says to his disciples that, I must decrease, he must increase. And that should be our motto. John pointed to Jesus as the light. That's what enlightened people do when life feels dark. They point others to light, they look for the silver lining, they put on a positive spin, they give hope by being positive, they give people the benefit of the doubt.

Truly Enlightened people are encouraging, tell the truth, they are honest, but with charity. And they have integrity. They say what they mean and mean what they say. And they have self-discipline because they know the light personally. It's not that they know about Christ, they know Him as a trustworthy and dependable friend, and when they forget that they simply go back towards Him, every morning and every evening, they say, Behold the lamb of God, behold the love of God, behold Him who takes away my sins and the sins of the world.

One reason we refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God is because in St. John's gospel, Pilate condemned Jesus to death on the preparation day for Passover at noon, the hour when the priests began to slaughter Passover lambs in the temple.

The mass is a prayer of scripture. Our response to this scripture in mass is, "Lord I'm not worthy to receive you but only say the word and my soul shall be healed"

This is the third act of contrition or reconciliation in the mass to prepare our heart to receive the Eucharist. This is the third time that we turn back toward the light just before receiving the light in the Eucharist. The first time is at the beginning of mass, the Kyrie, Lord have mercy or confitior, The second sign of reconciliation is the sign of peace.

And each time it brings more light into our soul. We add light to light. How do we turn up the light. How do we reflect Gods light to our community. The more we behave like God the brighter the light Becomes. What if everyone here this weekend did not tell a single lie all week long. What if every child and spouse and business person were completely honest for the rest of the month.

What would change in our community if gossip stopped for an entire week. What if I turned to the Lamb of God, the love of God, with my frustration or worries first before talking about someone else. Wouldn't that be more like filling my day with the colors of the sunrise and the sunset rather than the monotony of fear of darkness. We can do that. When I remember that God is God and I am not all I have to say is, Behold the love of God who takes away the fears of the world. And then wait for the light to grow.

When I ask God to remove the things and temptations in my life that keep me from being honest and truthful, He loves to help me with that. When I say, Lord I want to have a life where I can always be sincere and authentic, He can't resist helping us with that because that's how He is. God wants me to become like Him because God is at total peace and He wants that for me.

Anthony de Mellow said, "Behold God Beholding you and smiling. "

So what am I beholding today? Am I beholding the love of God? If I don't recognize God beholding me and smiling then I might be holding the wrong person.