

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C
August 21, 2022

1st Reading: Isaiah 66: 18 – 21.

God is calling a great ingathering: people brought together from every nation.

Psalm: Psalm 117: 1 – 2.

Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.

2nd Reading: Hebrews 12:5 – 7, 11 - 13.

Suffering can be seen as a form of discipline from a loving parent.

Gospel: Luke 13:22 – 30.

God is inviting all people of faith to a banquet of love in God's Reign.

God is good, **All the time**; All the time, **God is good**

Friends, how synchronous is it that upon returning from a trip of a lifetime where I experienced how big, how magnificent, and majestic God is and how small and insignificant I and our planet really are. Still God chooses to bless our world and me. I mean I saw the world from 35000 feet up; I saw four absolutely stunning sunsets at sea; I saw standing stones on the Orkney Islands that are older than Stonehenge, older than the pyramids; I was able to stand over the spot where the Atlantic Ocean meets the North Sea; at Alnwick Castle in Northumberland I viewed the spot where St. Thomas More, should I call him Sir, was beheaded outside the castle wall as a sign that he was nobody; I was privileged to meet people from all over this small globe, including an Episcopal priest, Mother Beverly from Toledo, Ohio; not to mention the quality time I got to spend with Becky; as well as being not only welcomed and made to feel at home by the staff and crew of the Aegean Odyssey. (What is it synchronous with?) To come home and must break open the Word for this Sunday, which for me reflected this trip completely.

Isaiah the prophet who was at the time the Israelites were returning from Babylon and he is prophesizing about a God who is calling all nations to the table, a sort of rainbow if you will because the Reign of God is for all. This would not have gone over too well with the Israelites who believed God was their God and was there for them.

Our Psalm this evening, the shortest psalm in the First Scriptures calls us to give God all the praise and glory we can, always and in all places.

The letter to the Hebrews really caught my attention. Is there anyone here who remembers one or the other of your parents saying to you, “this is going to hurt me more than it does you!” It was called discipline which has learning as its root. The truth be told, in my case it was true. It really destroyed my mother’s hand before she discovered the paddle. Anyway, the intention was to keep us safe and to ultimately make it to adulthood on the right path. So, when we experience pain, suffering, disillusionment do we look to learn from it and open our heart to see and meet the needs of others? St. Paul or the author wants us to remember how Jesus suffered, died, and rose for us: Christ did this freely and with us in mind! This reading shows us that the key requirement for being a Christian is discipline in the way we live our lives and carry out our responsibilities. We are called to show our Christlikeness in every facet of our life, REMEMBERING we are given everything we need to carry it out.

Luke has Jesus on the Road to Jerusalem, teaching and healing all those on the way; when someone asks the question: “Who and how many will be saved?” It seems to me that Jesus in his impatience tells him/her that is God’s job – no one has that information. Ask instead what I can do to bring people to the banquet and the Reign of God. Is my heart open to do the work of a true and faithful disciple. Will this be easy? Jesus says the gate is narrow! No matter what do not quit but hang in there with an open heart and keep putting one foot in front of the other. I

remember my father telling me, more than once because I was a slow learner, “A quitter never wins; and a winner never quits!” You see it all really spins on relationship. What I hear in Jesus’ admonition today is just keep going forward with an open heart. Realizing that discipleship means following Jesus to the very end – whether we fall at the front or the back of the line – that’s a winner.

Perhaps, just perhaps God may be at work in us, inviting us to do some self-examination so that we can move about in our world more assured of God’s love even in the weakness of our lives. Consider God as being the cheerleader on our journey to the New Jerusalem urging us to make a way for the poor we encounter. May we not only welcome them but also make them feel at home.

God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good