

“If we have a crumb of a notion as to who God is...”

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C

Is 66:18-21, Ps 117:1, 2, Heb 12:5-7, 11-13, Lk 13:22-30



Dcn. Frank Sila
8/21/2022

Msgr. Bill Fitzgerald in his later years would often remark, “If we have a crumb of a notion as to who God is...” and then meander on to some insight and wisdom about God and his people. Fitz’s comments were drawn from a life of study, prayer, and service. His commitment to daily prayer deepened his understanding of God working in his life, the world and universe.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit priest and paleontologist, felt the pinnacle of evolution was a creature capable of reflective thought. A creature capable of orienting itself in space and time. With the dawn of that consciousness and the possibility of critical reflection, mankind could now discover and know God.

We have the good fortune to live in a time where the James Webb telescope stretches our understanding of our world, the universe and perhaps multiverse. Msgr. Fitz would have loved the images as they challenge and increase our awe and wonder as to who God is. “If we have but a crumb of a notion...”

In our first reading, the Prophet Isaiah, gives voice to the Lord, saying, “I have come to gather nations of every language.” Our spirituality may begin with dogma but will later be shaped by the Lord’s prompting and occasional nudge. How will the Lord gather the nations, today, in our time?

If we limit ourselves to a textbook knowledge of God, we stand on the mountain and risk never seeing God pass by. God uses all of creation as blackboard and classroom to inform and nurture our spirituality. With the wonder of the images from the James Webb Telescope, humanity’s arrogance is blunted, if for only a moment, by the sheer size of the universe. Who is this God that sets the stars and galaxies in their place? Our God is far greater than we can even imagine.

Creation is a gift, a classroom and blackboard, in which we orient ourselves in space and time to our Creator. Over the years, I have watched my mother and grandmother with hose in hand water their gardens. Somehow, they intuitively knew this. *Creation is a gift, a classroom and blackboard, in which we orient ourselves in space and time to our Creator.*

Creation is the common language that God uses to draw all people and cultures into intimacy and love. Sadly, we have claimed creation as our own, parceling off the sacred night to the highest bidder. Our arrogance is the narrow gate that today's Gospel speaks of. Arrogance will always narrow the gate while humility widens it.

As some choose to pollute the environment others choose to pollute with misinformation. The quest for ever greater power is an arrogance that narrows the gate and disregards the weakest among us. The true strength of a nation lies, not in its military, or politicians, but rather its capacity to care for the marginalized. Therein is a greater truth that is ours to seek out.

Where are the men and women who can dream the dreams and imagine solutions as they work towards the common good? The consciousness that arises from evolution carries the responsibility of critical thinking and action. Is this not what Jesus taught? When we frame our actions for the wellbeing of all we find ourselves, as our Gospel suggests, "...reclining at table in the kingdom of God."

We are called to orient ourselves within creation, humbly recognizing the prime mover of all life and Spirit. That Spirit resonates in all of us and in our relationships. There is no greater intimacy. Knowing this there is no greater joy.

I recall in my youth camping alone under the stars. I remember one particular evening for the dusk of summer and the last wisps of color. I listened to the sounds about me. There was a gentle breeze through the uppermost pine branches and needles. They offered a soft fragrance and voice of something beyond. The stars appeared and I wondered at what I saw. Could they ever be counted? Where again is Cassiopeia? Deer walked silently past; oblivious that I had bedded down. Other creatures stirred in the night. The frogs croaked in chorus.

The timelessness of these sounds and the sight of stars and moon assured me that my youth would unfold. I would find my place in this thing called life. Looking back, I realize this was an invitation to something more. There was a sense of the Sacred that evening. We are reminded on the journey, “Be not afraid.”

This God of creation has knit us in our mother’s womb and counted the hairs on our head. The Lord says, “I know their works and their thoughts.” Isaiah 66:18-19

In that intimacy we are invited to draw closer. May we bring our struggles, hopes and dreams to this altar to be consecrated with bread and wine. Eucharist is our food for the journey. He is with us always.

“If we have but a crumb of a notion...” Amen.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org. (n.d.).