



Come and See!

June 16, 2019, Holy Trinity Sunday

The Word...

The LORD possessed me, the beginning of his ways,
the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago...
then was I beside him as his craftsman,
playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race."
(from Prv 8:22--31)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.
But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth."
(from Jn 16:12-15)

Pondering the Word...

The readings this week are filled with richness. I encourage you to indulge in the beauty of Scripture each day!

Today, in Proverbs, we hear from "Lady Wisdom," (as Jewish scholar Robert Alter calls her); from Jesus in John's Gospel, we hear of the "Spirit of Truth." Jesus refers to the Spirit as a "he," so as I began to pray about this juxtaposition, the memory of my own parents and of my husband's eulogies for both of them flooded my heart (and my eyes), so I ask for your indulgence once again.

My siblings and I were blessed to have wonderful parents; our children, wonderful grandparents. At my father's funeral in 2001, my husband, Mark, spoke of his integrity. Dad was a highly moral man (except for, as my husband mentioned, occasionally on the golf course!) My husband advised the grandchildren: when faced with a moral decision, consider *what* grandpa would do if he were faced with the same situation.

My mother, who passed away two years ago, was a woman of great wisdom and hospitality. There was never a stranger when Mom was around; she delighted in people and always seemed to know the right thing to say and do. She relied on the Spirit to guide her. In her eulogy, my husband again advised the grandkids: when faced with a difficult situation, consider *how* grandma might handle it--with compassion and gentleness.

I am so grateful to have been blessed with such models of the Spirit of both Truth and Wisdom, and for the blessing of a husband who recognizes and celebrates that grace.

Living the Word...

I hope through this mini-tribute to my parents you can see the need for the Spirit in both forms—Truth and Wisdom. It reminds me of the beautiful image from Psalm 85, verse 11: "*Kindness and truth shall meet, justice and peace will kiss.*"

In this era of fake news and bold-faced lying, seeking the Truth is essential. But Wisdom is needed as well. The truth does not need to hurt; social justice does not always need to become social judgment and condemnation. Kindness and peace can reign as well. Consider this when you are faced with difficult situations: "*What* would the Spirit of Truth have me do? *How* would the Spirit of Wisdom guide my words and actions?"

Personal Reflections and Ideas: _____

Jun 17: *"We cause no one to stumble in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry;"* (2 Cor 6:1-10)
When I first read this, I thought it sounded self-serving. Paul seems to be concerned that his ministry not be blamed for anyone messing up. Upon reflection, I thought about my own ministry and how often I am tempted to impose my thinking, my own way of doing things on those to whom I minister. When I take this stance with the other, it often fails. They are likely to stumble, not because my intent is bad, but because I am looking at things through my eyes and my experience, and not with the eyes of the one I am serving. If we are true channels for the Spirit and recognize the God already present within the other, we can rest assured our ministry will not cause them to stumble, but that God will lead them as they need to be led.

Jun 18: *"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust."* (Mt 5:43-48)
Oooh, this is one of those big problems for us, isn't it? God has told us many times his ways are not our ways, that he is not like us, but it stills gets under our skin that those we consider "bad" often get off scot-free. We hope that, in the immortal words of Groucho Marx, *"time wounds all heels."* Like Jonah and Jeremiah we ask to see God's vengeance on those who have hurt us or that we deem as sinners. What would it be like if we did indeed pray—sincerely-- for those who persecute us, for those whose political stance is abhorrent to us? Might our own countenance be more like that of God's? Might we find peace for ourselves and for others?

Jun 19: *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."* (2 Cor 9:6-11)

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant." (Robert Louis Stevenson)

Jun 20: *"...And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*(Mt 6:1-6, 16-18)
Boy, is this timely! Pope Francis recently approved a change to the words Roman Catholics use to pray the "Our Father." He suggests a more accurate translation: *"Do not let us fall into temptation."* He says. *"A father doesn't (lead you into temptation); a father helps you to get up immediately. It's Satan who leads us into temptation, that's his department."* Here's what I found in some of the sources I use: In David Bentley Hart's literal translation: *"And do not bring us to trial, but rescue us from him who is wicked."* From Scrivener's Greek Textus Receptus: *"Do not bring us to trial, but rescue us from the wicked one."* From N.T. Wright's contemporary translation: *"Don't bring us into the great trial, but rescue us from evil."* The use of *"leading us into temptation"* goes back to the Hebrew Scriptures when God would test people (e.g., Abraham) to see if their faith was strong. God is our strength when our flesh is willing but our spirit is weak. God knows we will be tested and is there to rescue us when we inevitably fail. That's the most important thing to remember!

Jun 21: *"For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."* (Mt 6: 19-23)

This is a familiar, oft-quoted line from Scripture. We review in our minds all the things we treasure: faith, family, health, and friends. Of course, our hearts are there also. Or are they? I think this passage is more challenging if we flip it around: *"Where your heart is, there also will be your treasure."* We may say we treasure the gift of faith, but approach God half-heartedly. We know deep inside we treasure our families and our health, but instead work ourselves so hard, believing *"we are what we provide,"* or needing to feed our egos through accomplishments. Take a good look at where your heart is today. Does it match what you claim to treasure? This is a good awareness exercise you can do every day.

Jun 22: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I am content with weaknesses ...for when I am weak, then I am strong."* (2 Cor 12:1-10)

I recall being on retreat many years ago and praying to God about a few personality traits—thorns in my side—that I would like to have him eliminate from my repertoire (we won't go into them now, but suffice it to say they are still with me!) As I prayed, I realized I was, in effect, asking God to take away some of my humanity, some of what brings me to my knees seeking his mercy and love. Paul's words echoed in my heart: *"I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me!"* Pray with these wise words if you struggle with some particularly thorny traits. *"Alleluia: We are inadequate!"*