

For Sunday, July 1, 2018

Who Am I...Really?

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/070118.cfm>

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

Mark 5:21-43 or 5:21-24, 35b-43

When was the last time you pondered the question, “Who am I?” Ours is a world of distractions and demands. At the end of the day, many of us are left ruminating and agonizing over our list of “things we didn’t do” rather than taking delight in those things we did well. It takes desire and effort to carve out sufficient space in our lives to contemplate the bigger picture. The world’s illusion is simple but quite self-destructive. We are lured into thinking that present concerns are the only ones that matter and that who we are is simply a product of what we make ourselves to be. We find ourselves here on this planet with little time to ponder the question why.

It is no wonder that so many today come to the conclusion that we live and then we die. Who we are will simply fade into memory and will soon be forgotten. Embracing this philosophy requires only that I accept that I am finite. Can we really be our full whole selves by living this way? It seems that such thinking runs the risk of filling the world with people for whom the primary focus is their selves. Materialism, hedonism, self-aggrandizement, relativism, and the like are a sure by-product of a bunch of folks each doing their own thing to find “happiness.” Of course, some may find themselves pursuing some altruistic cause because it feels right or is politically correct. But there is no “higher reason” to do so, no call to be selfless from a source outside and inside oneself.

“For he fashioned all things that they might have being.” People of faith understand life differently. Have you ever given sufficient time and reflection (prayer) to contemplating the awesome reality that we are not accidental but intentional? God’s loving intentional design created me to be the person I am. No one else has ever or will ever be me! This fact is incredible! It is a primordial truth that stares us right in the face yet we do not always allow its power to impact us. We all get one shot at life with the chance to leave our unique thumbprint on the path we walk. We are here, in this time, on purpose!

God does not want us to merely perish. He formed us “to be imperishable.” We are made in God’s image! It is sad that the “evils of the world” have so much power. Corporations ... the internet ... social media ... businesses treating us more like machines and numbers rather than people ... misguided people using and exploiting innocent children for personal gain ... the tyranny of self-preservation and profit. All can easily override what our loving Creator has placed in our hearts, in our very souls. Evil and sin deprives us of the life God wants us to have.



For some, faith seems useless. To conduct the business of everyday life, especially in the way our world demands of us, can easily be done without “God.” Computers do not need “God.” We are acting more like computers. They control us and we allow it. This is a simple fact. If you doubt this then study what happens in an office when the internet is down for a few days. What would happen within you, personally and professionally, if the “plug got pulled” for a while? We could only go so long.

Jesus can touch us and heal us from ourselves, but we are often our biggest enemy. He wants to heal us from our misconceptions about who we are and where we are headed. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Does your life show others that you believe this? Or are you not yet so convinced? The Beatitudes are the blueprint to opening up the paths to all of our relationships, especially the path to the kingdom of God. Sadly, our relationships often do not model this blueprint, and we find ourselves spending more time serving the earthly kingdom we’ve created. We are ill and do not even know it. But we can get well and live! Jesus says to us, “Arise!”

All we need is to touch his cloak and allow him to show us the way, the way that God designed. This does require a leap of faith, and it also requires that we go against the grain of society and popular culture a bit. And we need to convince our world that the value of faith is not found in the daily workings of our world but in the daily beating of our hearts. We need faith to live, at least in the way that brings us to the fullness of life, here and in eternity. Touch Jesus’ cloak and ask him to heal you.

Rev. Mark Suslenko

PRAYER

Loving and creative God,
may I have the wisdom to accept and understand
the truth of who I am.
I am one of your unique beloved children
who has been made in your image
with a unique soul that is mine alone.
May your Son heal me of any misconceptions I have about myself.
Forgive and heal the times and ways I have sinned
and chosen things that are harmful to me, others and your beautiful creation.
Centered on you,
may I discover the fullness of life you desire for me
both now and in the life to come!
Amen

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