

FIFTH SUNDAY - A - FEBRUARY 9, 2014

ORDINARILY I FIND POETRY RATHER DIFFICULT....

***HOWEVER, I REALLY LOVE THE FOLLOWING SELECTION FROM A
BENGALI POET - R. TAGORE.***

***BEING A BENGALI POET DOESN'T MEAN THAT HE WRITES POETRY FOR
THE BENGALS.....***

IT MEANS HE IS A POET FROM INDIA ...

***IN FACT, HE WAS THE FIRST ASIAN TO WIN THE NOBEL PRIZE IN
LITERATURE...THAT WAS IN 1913 - OVER 100 YEARS AGO....***

HE WROTE THE FOLLOWING:

***"I SLEPT AND DREAMT THAT LIFE WAS A JOY...
I AWOKE AND SAW THAT LIFE WAS SERVICE...
I ACTED AND BEHOLD, SERVICE WAS JOY"***

LET ME REPEAT THAT.....

THAT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE IN LIFE....AND

***TO ME THAT IS THE MESSAGE OF TODAY'S READINGS, ESP. THE FIRST
READING FROM ISAIAH....***

***SHARE YOUR BREAD WITH THE HUNGRY, SHELTER THE OPPRESSED AND
THE HOMELESS....***

CLOTHE THE NAKED WHEN YOU SEE THEM....

DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR OWN.

***THEN YOUR LIGHT SHALL BREAK FORTH LIKE THE DAWN AND YOUR
WOUND SHALL QUICKLY BE HEALED....***

AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE YOUR REAR GUARD.....

THEN YOU SHALL CALL AND THE LORD WILL ANSWER.....

*IF YOU REMOVE FROM YOUR MIDST OPPRESSION, FALSE ACCUSATION
AND MALICIOUS SPEECH.....*

*IF YOU SATISFY THE AFFLICTED, THEN LIGHT SHALL RISE FOR YOU IN
THE DARKNESS AND THE GLOOM SHALL BECOME FOR YOU LIKE THE
MIDDAY.....*

*IN OTHER WORDS, SERVICE WILL BRING LIGHT AND JOY INTO YOUR
DAY....*

I NOTICED THIS PAST WEEK.....EVEN THOUGH IT WAS VERY COLD....

MOST DAYS WERE BRIGHT AND SUNNY.....

AND THAT HELPED A LOT.....

*THE BEAUTY OF THE SNOW WAS MORE EVIDENT AND LIFE SEEMED
MORE JOYFUL AND MORE HOPEFUL...*

*OUR POETS TODAY - BOTH THE JEWISH POET, ISAIAH, AND THE BENGALI
POET, R. TAGORE, ARE TELLING US THAT SERVICE ALSO BRINGS LIGHT,
THAT IS, JOY AND HOPE INTO OUR LIFE.....*

*TO FULLY APPRECIATE ISAIAH'S CHALLENGE WE NEED TO CONSIDER HIS
FIRST STATEMENT WITH GREAT CARE....IT IS A KEY TO WHAT FOLLOWS....
HE SPOKE ABOUT SHARING BREAD WITH THE HUNGRY - NOT GIVING
BREAD AWAY....*

SHARING SUGGEST A COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE.....

IT GOES BEYOND ALMSGIVING.....

CHALLENGING US TO BREAK BREAD WITH THE NEEDY...

I.E. SHARING A TABLE, WHICH IMPLIES SHARING CONVERSATION AND PRAYER

IT REMINDS ME OF THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING MEAL WE SPONSOR FOR THE NEEDY IN LOCAL HALFWAY HOUSES IN SI LOUNGE....

OF COURSE, WHEN PEOPLE ARE SEATED AT THE SAME TABLE , DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN CLASSES BEGIN TO FADE, WE BECOME FELLOW DINERS RATHER THAN SERVANTS AND MASTERS, INTELLECTUALS AND ILLITERATES.....

OF COURSE, THIS HAS BEEN THE MESSAGE OF FRANCIS, OUR POPE, SINCE HE BECAME POPE.....

WHEN PEOPLE EAT AND PRAY TOGETHER IN GRATITUDE, THE WELL OFF AND THE DESTITUTE FIND THEMSELVES SHARING THE EXACT SAME STATUS BEFORE GOD

NO ONE HAS A GREATER CLAIM TO THE GIFT OF LIFE THAN ANY OTHER....ALL ARE BENEFICIARIES OF THE SAME GRACE....

WE ALL LEARN.... WE ALL BENEFIT....

ISN'T THAT OUR EXPERIENCE IN SUCH A SITUATION????

I'M ALSO THINKING OF THE GROUP OF WOMEN IN OUR PARISH WHO MEETING REGULARLY IN A CIRCLES GROUP WITH FEMALE PRISONERS HERE IN DAYTON...

I'M THINKING OF THE EXPERIENCE OF A DOZEN OR SO COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM THE MARIANIST UNIVERSITIES WHEN THEY WENT TO LA FOR AN IMMERSION EXPERIENCE OVER THE WINTER BREAK IN EARLY

JAUNUARY.....

THEY VISITED AND SERVED AT VARIOUS SITES, INCLUDING A SHELTER FOR BATTERED WOMEN, THE "HIPPIE KITCHEN" RUN BY THE CATHOLIC WORKERS AND ALSO VISITED THE UNION RESCUE MISSION....

AS ONE STUDENT SAID, "WE SAW THE GRACE OF GOD THROUGH THE EYES OF THE POOR...."

BRIDGET HENNESEY, A STUDENT AT ST. MARY'S IN SAN ANTONIO SAID, " I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT MY JOB TO FIX SOMEONE, IT IS MY JOB TO TREAT ALL THOSE I ENCOUNTER WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY"

USUALLY, IN SUCH SITUATIONS WE RECEIVE MORE THAN WE GIVE....

AS A RESULT OF THE READING AND PREPARING THIS HOMILY I FIND MYSELF - ASKING MYSELF - WHAT AM I DONG TO REACH OUT TO THE MARGINALIZED....THE ANSWER, HONESTLY, IS NOT MUCH....

UNLESS YOU COUNT GIVING OUR BROTHERS FROM INDIA AND MEXICO A RIDE TO THE BARBER SHOP AND HELPING OUR BROTHER FROM HAITI WITH HIS WRITTEN ENGLISH FOR PAPERS IN HIS HISTORY COURSE....

EVERY TIME I AM BETTER OFF AFTER RESPONDING TO THEIR NEEDS BUT WE ALL HAVE TO FIND OUR OWN UNIQUE WAY OF REACHING OUT TO OTHERS AND BEING OF SERVICE IN OUR LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD...

IN THAT WAY WE BECOME THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.....

*AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT JESUS SAYS TO HIS FOLLOWERS AND TO US
TODAY....*

*" YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE
WORLD"*

IT'S INTERESTING, ISN'T IT, THE THINGS WE REMEMBER....

*ONE THING I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER ON THE DAY OF MY FATHER'S
FUNERAL - IT WAS A STATEMENT MADE BY ONE OF MY DAD'S FRIENDS AT
A SMALL AT A SMALL RECEPTION AFTER THE FUNERAL AT OUR HOUSE
AS HE WAS DLEAVING*

HE SAID OF MY DAD, "HE WAS TOP SHELF".....

I HAD NEVER HEARD THE TERM BEFORE OR SINCE.....

BUT I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE MEANT.....

HE WAS COMPLIMENTING MY DAD FOR BEING A WONDERFUL MAN....

OF COURSE, THAT HELPED ME A LOT....

TO ME MY DAD WAS PRETTY ORDINARY, I SUPPOSE.....

*I GUESS AS CHILDREN WE ALWAYS THINK OF OUR PARENTS AS BEING
PRETTY ORDINARY.....*

*BUT AS WE GET OLDER WE GROW IN OUR APPRECIATION OF THEM
WHEN CHRIST SAYS TO HIS FOLLOWERS AND TO US TODAY, 'YOU ARE*

THE SALT OF THE EARTH" "YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

HE IS SAYING TO US, "YOU ARE TOP SHELF"

BE CHOOSING TO BE MY FOLLOWER - YOU ARE TOP SHELF...

***YOU CAN BE THE SALT OF THE EARTH...
YOU CAN BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD...***

***LET US PRAY IN TODAY'S EUCHARIST, ESP. AS WE APPROACH THE ALTAR
THAT EACH OF US IN OUR OWN WAY WILL INDEED TRULY BE "SALT OF
THE EARTH AND LIGHT FOR OUR WORLD***