

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - C- MARCH 6, 2016

I WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE WHAT WE STARTED LAST SUNDAY...

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE NOT HERE LAST SUNDAY, I HAD THIS INTUITION THAT MANY CAME WITH THE QUESTION ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM "FACE THE MUSIC" - SO I BEGAN WITH A TREATMENT OF THE ORIGIN OF THAT PHRASE... and THE GOSPEL STORY OF LAST WEEK YOU'LL HAVE TO TALK WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS HERE IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THAT....

THIS WEEK WE WILL FOLLOW WITH A SEQUEL - AND MY INTUITION IS THAT MANY ARE PROBABLY COMING WITH THE QUESTION - I WONDER WHAT MIGHT BE THE MOST FAMOUS UNFINISHED PAINTING IN US HISTORY? ISN'T THAT A QUESTION MANY OF YOU CAME WITH???
WELL, IF SO, YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE....

PROBABLY, THE MOST FAMOUS UNFINISHED PAINTING IN US HISTORY IS THE "UNFINISHED PORTRAIT OF PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT....

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT WAS VACATIONING IN WARM SPRINGS, GA AT HIS PART-TIME HOME THE LITTLE WHITE HOUSE....

HIS MISTRESS LUCY MERCER RUTHERFORD HAD ARRANGED FOR HIM TO SIT FOR THE PAINTER ELIZABETH SHOUMATOFF....

ON APRIL 12, 1945, HER SECOND DAY OF PAINTING THE PRESIDENT - SHE WAS FILLING IN THE OUTLINES OF HIS FACE AND SHOULDERS - FDR EXPERIENCED A SEVERE PAIN IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD AND

COLLAPSED...

HE DIED THREE HOURS LATER....

**THE PAINTING WAS NEVER FINISHED AND REMAINS ON DISPLAY AT THE
LITTLE WHITE HOUSE IN WARM SPRINGS, GA...**

**NOW YOU ASK - WHY MIGHT IT BE LIKELY THAT MANY WOULD COME
TODAY WITH THE QUESTION WHAT IS THE MOST FAMOUS UNFINISHED
PAINTING IN US HISTORY?**

AND WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT TODAY..

THE REASON IS REALLY RATHER OBVIOUS....

**TODAY'S GOSPEL IS CERTAINLY THE MOST FAMOUS UNFINISHED
PARABLE IN HISTORY....**

**OBVIOUSLY, IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS PARABLES, PERIOD -
RIGHT UP THERE WITH THE GOOD SAMARITAN ----**

BUT IT IS TRULY UNIQUE BECAUSE IT IS ALSO UNFINISHED....

**WE ARE LEFT UP IN THE AIR - WE NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE
OLDER BROTHER -**

**DID HE STOMP OFF AND NEVER TALK TO HIS YOUNGER BROTHER OR DID
HE FINALLY SWALLOW HIS PRIDE AND GO IN AND JOIN THE
CELEBRATION - IN FACT - HOST THE CELEBRATION.....**

**BECAUSE THAT WAS HIS DUTY OF THE OLDER BROTHER
HOST THE WELCOMING CELEBRATION....**

OF COURSE, THE STORY IS UNFINISHED FOR A REASON....

IT IS DIRECTED PRIMARILY AT THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AT THE TIME

*WHO WERE CONVINCED OF THEIR OWN VIRTUE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND HARBORED NO RESPECT FOR THOSE THEY CONSIDERED SINNERS.....*

THE STORY WAS MEANT TO EXPOSE THEIR OWN HARD HEARTEDNESS....

THEIR OWN LACK OF COMPASSION FOR OTHERS

*THEIR OWN OVER EMPHASIS ON BEING RIGHT RATHER THAN BEING IN
RELATIONSHIP....*

*VALUING GOOD BEHAVIOR OVER RELATIONSHIPS, FORGIVENESS AND
LOVE....*

*SO THE QUESTION WAS LEFT AT THE END - WHAT WOULD YOU AS THE
OLDER BROTHER DO????*

*NOT ONLY THE VALUES BUT ALSO THE GENIUS, THE GIFTEDNESS OF
THE STORY TELLER IS OBVIOUS TO US, ISN'T IT?*

WE CAN ONLY MARVEL - IN GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION.....

*THIS STORY IS ALSO A GOOD EXAMPLE OF R. ROHR'S STATMENT THAT
JESUS DID NOT HAVE ANY PROBLEM WITH SINNERS.....*

HE HAD PROBLEMS WITH THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERENT SINNERS

*THIS STORY IS ALSO A CLASSIC BECAUSE OF THE WAY IT TOUCHES ON
FAMILY DYNAMICS*

*OF COURSE, TO BEGIN WITH - IN TERMS OF A FAMILY - IT COULD ALSO BE
MOTHER AND SONS OR DAUGHTERS OR FATHER AND DAUGHTERS....*

ANY COMBINATION....

*WE ARE TALKING HERE NOT ONLY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE CHILD AND THE PARENT BUT ALSO RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN*

SIBLINGS - BROTHERS AND SISTERS -

WHAT WE TYPICALLY CALL SIBLING RIVALRY...

UNLESS YOU ARE AN ONLY CHILD - THAT APPLIES TO EVERYONE OF US...

***WITHIN MY FAMILY, HOW DO I GET ALONG WITH MY BROTHER AND MY
SISTER.....***

WHAT ROLE DO I PLAY IN MY FAMILY DYNAMICS?

AM I THE SPECIAL ONE? AM I THE BLACK SHEEP?

***AM I THE CARETAKER? AM I THE PEACEMAKER? WE ALL HAVE A UNIQUE
ROLE IN OUR FAMILY AND WE LIVE IT OUT WITH ALL IT PLUSES AND
MINUSES...***

***THE BETTER WE UNDERSTAND IT...THE BETTER WE CAN DEAL WITH IT
AND NOT BE CONTROLLED BY IT BUT GROW WITHIN IT FOR OUR OWN
GOOD AND THE GOOD OF THE FAMILY....***

ANYWAY - BACK TO OUR STORY -

***ANOTHER IMPORTANT QUESTION IS - HOW DO I GET ALONG WITH MY
BROTHERS AND MY SISTERS....***

***AM I WILLING TO WELCOME THEM BACK WHEN THEY RETURN HOME -
EVEN IF THEY DISPLACE ME AND GET MORE ATTENTION FROM MOM AND
DAD???***

***FINALLY, OUR STORY TELLS US THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A GOOD
PARENT AND THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE WE NEED TO GIVE TO EACH
CHILD.....DESPITE HOW DIFFERENT THEY ARE....***

***ULTIMATELY HOWEVER, THE STORY CENTERS AROUND THE GRACIOUS
AND LOVING FATHER***

***A FATHER WHO STILL KNOWS HOW TO BOTH RUN AND THROW A PARTY -
RUN WHEN HE SEES THE SON WHILE HE WAS STILL A LONG WAY OFF
AND THROW A PARTY TO SPREAD THE JOY AND THANKSGIVING ALL
AROUND....THE FAMILY AND BEYOND***

***ALL OF WHICH, OF COURSE, IS TO REMIND US THAT WE MAY NEED TO
REVISE OUR IMAGE OF GOD.....***

***IS YOUR GOD A FATHER, A MOTHER WHO IS WILLING TO RUN OUT TO
MEET YOU WHEN YOU ARE STILL A LONG WAY OFF????***

IF NOT, YOU NEED TO UPDATE THAT IMAGE...

***IS YOUR GOD A FATHER, A MOTHER WHO IS FILLED WITH COMPASSION
UPON SEEING YOU AND EMBRACES YOU AND KISSES YOU....????***

IF NOT, YOU NEED TO UPGRADE THE IMAGE....

***IS YOUR GOD A FATHER, A MOTHER WHO IS WILLING TO THROW A PARTY
FOR YOU ????-***

***CLOTHE YOU WITH THE FINEST ROBE, PUT A SPECIAL RING ON YOUR
FINGER AND SPECIAL SANDALS ON YOUR FEET AND BRING OUT THAT
FATTED CALF????***

***JUST FOR YOU.....YOU ARE THAT SPECIAL
EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T DESERVE IT????***

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH DESERVING IT -

NOT ONE OF US DESERVES IT.....

***YOUR FATHER, YOUR MOTHER WANTS YOU BACK MORE THAN ANYTHING
- NO MATTER WHAT?***

AS R. ROHR SAYS: GOD DOES NOT LOVE US BECAUSE WE ARE GOOD..

GOD LOVES US BECAUSE GOD, BOTH OUR FATHER AND OUR MOTHER, IS

SO OVERWHELMINGLY GOOD, LOVING AND COMPASSIONATE.....

LET US PRAY THAT WE MIGHT COME TO OUR SENSES.....

LET US PRAY THAT WE MIGHT WELCOME OUR BROTHER AND OUR SISTER

BACK INTO OUR FAMILY AND RUSH IN TO BE THE HOST OR HOSTESS

FOR THE GREAT PARTY AWAITING US.....