

Good News Daily

July 31-August 6, 2016

Sunday, July 31

Mark 3:20-30 *"Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness."* (v.29 NRSV)

Alan Jones, former Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, wrote in *Living in the Spirit*: "At our worst and darkest moments, we can affirm that we are God's handiwork, that His image has marked us forever, that the most real thing about us is the Holy Spirit who dwells in every human heart." When we deny the voice of the Holy Spirit within us, we are going against all that is holy, true, and best within us. As someone has said, "We have a moral compass within us, which is always pointing to Christ and his way of love." The violence, the suffering, and the agony that the world is so full of today come from our walking in the opposite direction from the pointing compass. Our unconquerable hope lies in the fact that "the most real thing about us is the Holy Spirit who dwells in every human heart." Surely the day will dawn when each human being made in the image of our God, will respond to His love with love.

Judges 6:1-24; Psalms 93, 96; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Birthdays: Maggie Rae Moody and Kirk Peart

Anniversaries: None

Monday, August 1

John 1:1-18 *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* (v.5a)

"But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (v.12). "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (v.14a). Surely these are some of the most awe-inspiring, beautiful words that have ever been written. The light of God's love for us, His forgiveness of us, His acceptance of us, and His trust of us all goes on shining in spite of all our sin and failure. He has given us believers, made in His Image, the power to become all He in His great love for us would have us be. Jesus came to earth to live among us to tell us the Good News of his Father's love for us and of the abundance of life, love, and joy he craves for us all.

Billions of believers have responded through the years and have been healed, converted, and transformed. The deepest, truest, best part of us proclaims: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

May each of us become ever more worthy of being what we already are—mortals made in the Image of our God.

Judges 6:25-40; Psalm 80; Acts 2:37-47

Birthdays: Marjorie Edwards

Anniversaries: None

Tuesday, August 2

John 1:19-28 *"I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal."* (v.27b)

John the Baptist tells us in our Gospel today that he is not worthy even to untie the thong of Christ's sandal. The apostle Peter, when he was beginning to realize whom Christ was, told Jesus to depart from him because he was a sinful man, and Paul speaks of himself as the chief of sinners. Karl Rahner, a modern-day Jesuit, implores Christ to give him the strength and courage to be worthy of being called a Christian. When confronted with the greatness, goodness, and holiness of Christ, their initial reaction was that they were not worthy of being called his friends.

When we honestly confront our own sinfulness—our anger, our envy, our lack of love—we too wonder how our Lord Christ could ever choose us as his friends. The great Good News is that the one and only reason he lived and lives among us is to heal us, convert us, transform us into what he created us to be—friends of the living God.

Judges 7:1-18; Psalm 78:1-39; Acts 3:1-11

Birthdays: Carl Belnavis and Elouise Francis

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, August 3

John 1:29-42 *When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?"* (v.38b)

"What are you looking for?" That's one of the most important questions Jesus ever asks of us. What is our aim in life? What are our goals? Our priorities? What do we want from life? To get or to give? What is the purpose of it all for us? What is life's meaning? Why are we here?

The next most important question Jesus asks of us is: "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29). When we can answer that question with Peter's reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," all the other questions fade away. Christ becomes the center of our life, the meaning and the purpose of all our striving.

The last important question of all that Jesus asks of us is, "Who are you looking for?" (John 18:4). The rest of our life will be spent seeking to draw closer to Christ and seeking to become all he is calling us to be—his friends, his disciples, his followers. We will no longer be strangers and aliens,

but are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Judges 7:19—8:12; Psalm 119:97-120; Acts 3:12-26

Birthdays: Sandra Augustin, Kayla Ctooks, Marissa Franco-Velez and Patricia Mason

Anniversaries: None

Thursday, August 4

John 1:43-51 *Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* (v.49)

One of my very favorite Collects in the *Book of Common Prayer* is the last one of the church year, the one just before Advent and the beginning of a New Year: "Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords, mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever, Amen." It is our selfishness, our greed, our lack of the practice of love—these are what divide us from one another. If only we would accept God's way of love for one another, what a different world we would be living in! Our hatred and our fear would vanish. The kingdom of God would have come and His will for earth; that it become what He has always intended it to be, heaven on earth, would be here.

Judges 8:22-35; Psalm 145; Acts 4:1-12

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: None

Friday, August 5

John 2:1-12 *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."* (v.5b)

In our Gospel story today Mary simply states a fact: "They have no wine." She doesn't tell Jesus what she thinks he should do about the situation, as you and I are so prone to do when we pray. She just points out the lack, the need, to her son. Then while waiting patiently for his answer, she tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

The eventual response of Jesus is to perform what the Gospel writer John calls his first "sign" meaning the first manifestation of who he really is—the Christ, the Son of the Living God. John ends his story by saying that the disciples believed in him.

Marcus Borg, in *Meeting Jesus for the First Time Again*, writes, "Believing in Jesus in the sense of giving one's heart to him is the movement from secondhand religion to firsthand religion, from having heard about Jesus with the hearing of the ear to

being in relationship with the Spirit of Christ." May each of us confide our deepest heart desires to Jesus and do whatever he tells us to do.

Judges 9:1-16, 19-21; Psalm 88; Acts 4:13-31

Birthdays: Karla Castellanos

Anniversaries: George, Jr. & Jennifer Chang, Deric & Patricia Officer, Joyce & Huntley Restal, Raymond & Elaine Wagner and Raymond Marcia Young

Saturday, August 6

John 2:13–25 *Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple...* (v.15a)

I, for one, am greatly drawn to the Jesus I think of as very loving, gentle, compassionate, and forgiving. But there is another Jesus I tend to turn my back on—the one who tries to tell me what the cost of following him will be. This Jesus tells me I must love all others the way he loves me. He tells me things like: "You give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37), "You cannot serve God and wealth" (Luke 16:13), and "Give to him that asks of thee and from him that would borrow turn not thou away" (Matthew 5:42). He asks me questions that I would rather not think about today. Questions like: "What are you looking for?" (John 1:38), "But who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29), and "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6). This Jesus gets right down to the core of what true religion is, not just words but loving actions for others. I, for one, know that I fall terribly short of being all he is demanding that I become. But I also know that if I will only choose to give myself completely to him, he is more than willing to help me become all he is urging me to for my ultimate joy.

Judges 9:22-25, 50-57; Psalms 87, 90; Acts 4:32—5:11

Birthdays: Jennifer Chang, William Devierno, Janqi Manzur, Rou Reid, Maisie Reynolds, Mike Roy and James Wagner

Anniversaries: Gretal & John McCullars

by Sister Mary Michael

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