



Come and See!

Week of August 10, 2025, 19 OT

The Word...

The night of the Passover was known beforehand to our fathers,
that, with sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith,
they might have courage. ...
For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice
and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution
(*Wis 18:6-9*).

Pondering the Word...

Way back in January, I suggested a theme for ordinary time this year: Courage in Community. I've tried to weave that theme in and out as the Spirit has led. Today's quote from the Book of Wisdom fits perfectly.

The community has been told what is about to happen and how to prepare for the Lord's Passover. The Exodus story tells of the plagues and amazing things the Israelites have witnessed at Moses' hand, and that surely helped to foster for them the "sure knowledge" that God would be true to the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They have seen God's power.

Still, they ask that they might have courage.... courage when the angel of death appears. Courage to have faith in God's promises when the going gets rough, as it will time and again in their desert trek to the promised land. Courage to put aside their human egos and fears, to trust in God's word. Courage to be able to stand firm in hope when things around them are falling to pieces.

They pray for courage. They'll need it. So do we.

Living the Word...

One phrase in today's reading causes me to pause: "*the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.*" What would "one accord" look like in our world? In Christianity? In our country or community? In our family?

Next questions: "Who are the holy children of the good? And what is the divine institution? Recall our reflection last Sunday: "*Everyone is unshakably good, and we belong to each other (no exceptions).*" Do I believe in the inherent goodness of all God's children? How wide or narrow is my definition of "holy children" and "divine institution?" How does that help or hinder my courage to work with "one accord" in community?

And, finally, when I pray for courage to hold fast to God's promises despite the chaos around me, am I more like the tribal Israelites, praying for God to defeat those who oppose me? Or do I pray to Jesus to have the courage to love my enemies, to do good to and forgive those who hurt me? Am I willing to pray for all: "*For the sake of the house of the LORD, our God, I will pray for your good?*" (Ps 122, NAB).

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Aug 11: *"For the LORD is the God of gods...who has no favorites, accepts no bribes, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So, you too must befriend the alien"* (Dt 10:12-22). SIGH! In the Catholic lectionary, this reading shows up every two years. The message remains the same, but the reality in which we live gets worse. What is it that we don't understand? Or is it that we don't want to listen? **Provision: Let's be perfectly clear.** God has no favorites. Period. No country or principality, no religion or faith practice, no race, no gender, no individual...no favorites. God has a preferential option for the poor, the oppressed, and the alien. Period. God expects us to treat others the way God treats all. What is your opinion? What do you read here contrasted with our lived reality? Are you willing to be perfectly clear in dialogue with others?

Tue, Aug 12: *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for their angels in heaven look upon the face of my heavenly Father"* (Mt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14). I can't read this passage without "feeling" the pictures of starving children in Gaza and South Sudan, dying from brutality and the withdrawal of life-saving aid; children traumatized for life in Ukraine, Haiti, and in my own country, witnessing their parents being snatched off the street by people wearing masks. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, *"The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children."* Conversely then, the indictment of society is found in what it does to its children. **Provision: Improve the life of a child in need.** Like the disciples in yesterday's gospel, I can become "overwhelmed with grief." But Jesus compels us: we are to put the grief aside and work in any way we can. We are to turn towards, not away, from the suffering we see. Find opportunities to help children in need in your community.

Wed, Aug 13: *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Mt 18:15-20). I haven't been thinking enough about these words. When I'm on auto-pilot, going from one meeting or project to the next, I often forget to even acknowledge Jesus' presence, much less invite him into the conversation! This is particularly important these days when Jesus can't get a word in edgewise amid lies, vitriol, and contentious debate. **Provision: Picture Jesus sitting with you.** Before you run headlong into the next project or discussion, stop and imagine Jesus is right there with you. Not judging, not scolding, just being there to support you. How would you want to speak and act knowing he's right there?

Thurs, Aug 14: *Joshua said, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD, your God. This is how you will know that there is a living God in your midst"* (Jos 3:7-10, 11, 13-17). The Book of Joshua is not a pleasant read. It's representative of the tribal world in which the Israelites lived: God's presence was witnessed in the conquests of other lands and the slaughter of other tribes. But this one line strikes me as good advice: "Listen to the words of the Lord. Pay attention. This is how you will know there is the living God in your midst." Many people wonder if the living God—Jesus—is truly in our midst given the cruelty we witness daily. I struggle too, yet my faith impels me to pay attention and look for God's presence even among the ruins. **Provision: Listen and look for the living God today.** Put the news feed aside. Read scripture. Then, pay close attention. Look for evidence of the living God in our midst; or, better yet, be the face of the living God for others.

Fri, Aug 15: *"The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God"* (Rv 11:19; 12:1-6, 10). I wonder why God doesn't prepare a cushier setting for Jesus' mother—she's been through a lot! But the desert is the place one goes to meet God, to ponder, to reflect, to rest. While most of us avoid desert experiences, Mary serves as a model to instead embrace quiet, restful time with God, free of distractions. **Provision: Find a nearby "desert."** Ideally, it could be in nature, but just sitting in the carpool line can be a desert space. Be intentional: put the phone down, turn off the music or talking heads. Try to find "bursts" of silence each day.

Sat, Aug 16: *"This stone shall be our witness, for it has heard the words the LORD spoke to us"* (Jos 24:14-29). Stones show up in many Bible stories: the stone altars Abraham built, the stone on which Jacob lays his head when he's on the run, the stone tablets. Large stones were used in ancient times to commemorate commitments and covenants. For Christians, the stone rolled away from the empty tomb is our reminder of the new covenant in Christ. I have several small stones I've collected along the way on retreats and journeys. Each one holds a special meaning for me, but they all bring to mind the promise of new life. **Provision: How do you commemorate and bear witness to the new covenant and our commitment to live in Christ?**