

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: Cycle "B"
Sunday, 19 August 2018 – SHO/SPW

IT'S BEEN AN INTERESTING COUPLE OF WEEK
AS WE'VE JOURNEYED THROUGH JOHN'S BREAD OF LIFE DISCOURSE:

- 3 WEEKS AGO, THEY WERE GRUMBLING
- LAST WEEK THEY WERE MURMURING
- THIS WEEK, THEY'RE QUARRELING.

IF YOU EVER THOUGHT THAT PEOPLE HAVE CHANGED OVER THE CENTURIES,
YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK AGAIN.

- WHILE THEY DIDN'T HAVE IPHONES OR THE INTERNET IN THE 1ST CENT.
THERE WERE STILL PLENTY OF:
 - QUARRELS
 - DEBATES
 - ARGUMENTS, and
 - CONTROVERSIES.
- THE FLAWS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF HUMANITY
WERE JUST AS PRESENT BACK THEN AS THEY ARE TODAY.

JESUS HAD ANY NUMBER OF VALID REASONS TO "THROW IN THE TOWEL."

- HE COULD HAVE SAID:
 - NO MATTER WHAT I SAY, THEY'RE ALWAYS POINTING FINGERS AT ME.
 - NO MATTER WHAT I DO, PEOPLE JUST SHAKE THEIR HEADS AT ME.
- WHILE WE KNOW THAT JESUS COULD'VE EASILY GIVEN UP ON HIS PEOPLE
HE DIDN'T!
 - INSTEAD, HE REMAINED TRUE TO HIS DEEPEST INTUITIONS.
 - HE CONTINUED TO TEACH AND TO CHALLENGE,
TO HEAL AND TO FORGIVE.
 - HE REMAINED TRUE TO WHAT THE FATHER ASKED OF HIM,
DESPITE ALL THE INHERENT FRUSTRATIONS HE ENCOUNTERED!

IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, JESUS SAW SOMETHING IN HIS PEOPLE
THAT THEY DIDN'T EVEN SEE IN THEMSELVES!

- A VERY PLAUSIBLE CORRILARY IS THAT
JESUS ALSO SEES SOMETHING IN YOU AND ME ...
THAT WE DON'T SEE IN OURSELVES.
 - FR. BILL SHANNON, A PRIEST IN ROCHESTER NY,
WROTE A BOOK ENTITLED:
 - ▶ HERE ON THE WAY TO THERE: CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES ON DYING

- IN HIS BOOK, FR. SHANNON MAKES AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION ABOUT THE WAY GOD SEES US ... and COMPARES IT TO THE WAY WE SEE OURSELVES!
 - YOU AND I GO THROUGH LIFE LOOKING AT, and interacting with, A PLETHORA OF PEOPLE.
 - YET, IN EVERY ONE OF OUR LIFE-ENCOUNTERS, THE ONLY PERSON WHOSE FACE WE CANNOT SEE IS OUR OWN!
 - SURE, WE CAN LOOK UPON OURSELVES IN A MIRROR, BUT even there WE ONLY SEE A REFLECTION.
 - WE CAN LOOK AT A PHOTOGRAPH OR PAINTING, BUT ALL WE SEE IS AN IMAGE OF OURSELVES IN THE PAST.
 - FR. SHANNON SAYS THAT IT'S ONLY AT THE TIME OF DEATH THAT WE'RE ABLE TO SEE OUR OWN FACE ... and that face IS THE ONE WE SEE IN GOD!
 - BUT THIS TRUE VISION OF OURSELVES ONLY HAPPENS ... ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GRAVE ... WHEN WE'VE ACQUIRED A "SUPERNATURAL FOCUS."
 - IN THE HERE & NOW, THOUGH, OUR VISION IS FAR FROM CLEAR, which is a concept that OUR OPENING PRAYER SEEMED TO CAPTURE QUITE WELL:
 - ▶ O GOD, WHO HAVE PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE YOU GOOD THINGS WHICH NO EYE CAN SEE,
 - FILL OUR HEARTS, WE PRAY, WITH THE WARMTH OF YOUR LOVE, SO THAT, LOVING YOU IN ALL THINGS AND ABOVE ALL THINGS,
 - ▶ WE MAY ATTAIN YOUR PROMISES, WHICH SURPASS EVERY HUMAN DESIRE.
 - THIS PRAYER ACKNOWLEDGES HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR YOU AND ME TO SEE THE GOOD THINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
 - PERHAPS THAT'S WHY AT TIMES WE:
 - MUMBLE
 - GRUMBLE, and
 - QUARREL.

GRATEFULLY GOD REFUSES TO LEAVE YOU AND ME
IN THAT STATE OF MUMBLING, GRUMBLING, AND QUARRELING.

- GOD WANTS TO GIVE YOU AND ME
A SACRAMENTAL WAY OF SEEING so that
IN THE ORDINARINESS OF LIFE ... we might discover
THE EXTRAORDINARY AT WORK!
- IN HEARING JESUS TELL US: "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"
YOU AND I ARE CALLED TO REACT IN SEVERAL WAYS;
WE ARE CALLED TO:
 - 1 RECOGNIZE HIS FACE – HIS REAL SACRAMENTAL PRESENCE –
IN THE EUCHARIST; BOTH:
 - IN THE BREAD THAT HAS BECOME HIS BODY, and
 - THE WINE THAT HAS BECOME HIS BLOOD.
 - 2 BUT THAT'S NOT ALL!!!
 - WHEN WE GAZE UPON THE EUCHARIST,
THE LORD IS ALSO EXPECTING US TO RECOGNIZE OUR OWN FACE!
 - THROUGH BAPTISM YOU & I BECAME MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY,
and
EACH TIME WE PARTAKE OF THE EUCHARIST,
WE ARE STRENGTHENED
"TO EVERMORE BECOME" THAT WHICH WE HAVE CONSUMED:
THE BODY OF CHRIST.

CAN GOD LIVE WITH OUR GRUMBLING, & MURMURING, & QUARRELING?

- SURE
- HE MIGHT LIKE TO DO WITHOUT IT, BUT HE CAN LIVE WITH IT.

THAT, THOUGH, WHICH GOD CANNOT ACCEPT
IS (whether occasionally or ongoingly)
OUR REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE WHO IT IS THAT WE:

- ARE!
- HAVE BECOME!
 - YOU AND I ARE TRULY:
 - SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD
 - MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST
 - A HOLY PEOPLE LIVING IN COMMUNION WITH:
 - GOD, and
 - ONE ANOTHER.
 - WHAT WILL YOU DO, today and throughout the coming week,
TO GROW IN YOUR APPRECIATION OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS???