



Come and See!

Week of August 3, 2025, 18 OT

The Word...

“Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all”
(Col 3:1-5, 9-11).

Pondering the Word...

I’ve mentioned before that I have the honor to be on a spiritual team that guides the Ignatian Volunteer Corps in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. We are reading a book this service year entitled *Cherished Belonging* by Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ (2024, Avid Reader Press). He is the priest who has worked with gang members in Los Angeles for the past 40 years and founded Homeboy Industries (<https://homeboyindustries.org/>). It is worth your while to learn about this amazing man, the program, and the extraordinary people who work for and participate in Homeboys.

The book is about radical love...and I mean radical love... Jesus love. It is about Christ being all and in all, especially in those whose earthly deeds we deem immoral, unpure, or even evil. Greg makes us look at the concept of evil very differently. I’m sure some people will scoff at the kind of love and life he writes about, saying it would never be possible; that is, if you don’t believe everything is possible for God!

Greg tells us there are two “unwavering principles” that underpin Homeboy Industries: “1) *Everyone is unshakably good (no exceptions)* and 2) *We belong to each other (no exceptions)*” (p.2). In the words of today’s reading from Colossians, he calls all of us to put on a “new self” made in the “image of the creator,” with no labels, no barriers, no exceptions...only Christ in all.

“I really only love God as much as the person I love the least” (Dorothy Day).

Living the Word...

There’s a lot of hate in our world. While I can honestly say there is no one I actually hate, I sure as heck despise the lies of, and the actions being taken by my country’s current government, and by countries waging war and killing innocents. And I’m know there are people who abhor the stance taken by people like me. I just pray we can agree to disagree and stop hating and demonizing each other.

The kind of love we are talking about rises above political party, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender, race, and all the other labels we assign to those who are different from us. It is the kind of love Jesus calls us to hold in our hearts and demonstrate to *everyone*. If you are up for challenge to look differently at your life and how you love, I suggest *Cherished Belonging* to you. It surely is challenging me.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Aug 4: *"I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy for me"* (Nm 11:4-15). I know many people who express the frustration Moses is bringing to God. In this case, it's the grumbling people themselves weighing Moses down; what I hear today is about burdens being laid on people from all walks of life: immigrants and the poor, of course, but also scientists, dedicated public servants, young people who can't find jobs, and people who minister to others. Moses is not afraid to be direct with God, and God listens. Reading further, we hear God takes some of the Spirit bestowed on Moses and gives it to 70 elders. (If I were Moses, I'd be thinking "I've been bearing this burden alone and now you split up my job among 70 people!") **Provision:** **Ask for help.** If you feel burdened and alone for whatever reason: too much need from those you serve, grieving, or depressed, don't suffer in silence. Say to God, "I can't carry this all by myself." Make sure, though, you're willing to accept help from others, even if it means being vulnerable or giving up some control.

Tue, Aug 5: *Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side of the sea, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray* (Mt 14:22-36). If we follow Matthew's Gospel chronologically, last Saturday, we hear Jesus has learned of John the Baptist's murder. Yesterday, we hear he wants to get away to grieve, but the demands of the crowd press upon him, so he puts aside his needs for those of others. But note: he does what he can for the crowd, dismisses them and his disciples, and goes off to be alone with God. **Provision:** **Make sure to take time alone with God.** Or, if being alone with God is too difficult, find a good God-friend or spiritual guide to sit with you in silence. Open your painful heart to God.

Wed, Aug 6: *While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then a voice said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him"* (Lk 9:28-36). **Provision:** **"Listen to him."** Shadows and clouds of all kinds occur in our lives: loss of loved ones, of our livelihood, of hope; illness, depression, imprisonment, war. So many are frightened by the clouds and shadows that veil our world, and yet we do our best to keep our ears open to hear God's voice: *"This is my chosen one; listen to him."* Listen to his words of mercy, compassion, and love. Listen to him say, *"Do not be afraid. I am with you always."*

Thurs, Aug 7: *"You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do"* (Mt 16:13-23). This is a dangerous line Jesus uses today. Sure, I get what he is saying, but it seems to me it serves to anthropomorphize God even further. What does God "think?" For me, God is love, so any thinking going on has to do with pure love. And I see God with a heavy heart and head in hands right now. I don't even want to imagine what God thinks of us! **Provision:** **What do you think God "thinks?"** For the sake of reflection, imagine you are Peter, walking a distance behind the group, trying to understand what Jesus has said to you. If you were to think like God, what would change in your own current thinking? I'd have a lot of changing to do. How about you?

Fri, Aug 8: *"I remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I remember your wonders of old"* (Ps 77). The psalmist speaks of the days of old, of Moses and Aaron, and all God's wondrous deeds in Egypt and in the desert. But remember what God says when Moses asks God's name: "I AM." Not "I was" or just "I will be." "I AM." If we spend our time lost in memories of what God did a long time ago, we miss the living message of the Incarnation: "I AM." **Provision:** **Look for God's wondrous deeds today.** In his exercises, St. Ignatius says it's good to use our memories of God's providence, especially when we are feeling low. But these are memories of God's hand in our own lives. Reflect today on how God has been present in your life. And then, look around. See if you can see God's wondrous deeds right now!

Sat, Aug 9: *Jesus said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I endure you?"* (Mt 17:14-20). Some people are uncomfortable with Jesus showing human emotions. I like it when Jesus gets frustrated. It helps me to accept my own frustration. But I want to share what I read about this story: *"[It] functions as a demonstration of the 'little faith' of the disciples. What Jesus does they should also have been able to do"* (The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century, p.1208, emphasis added). **Provision:** **"You will do even greater things than these" (Jn 14:12).** Is this hard for you to believe? Perhaps it's because we focus more on the "physical" miracles of Jesus. What about the miracles he performs for Zacchaeus, for the woman caught in adultery, for the woman at the well? Are their healings any less significant? Let your faith in Jesus' Spirit lead the way. What Jesus does...how Jesus loves...we should also be able to do.