



THE GRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 48

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 19, 2007

...SO THAT YOU MAY NOT GROW WEARY OR LOSE HEART

In the gospel reading today, Jesus gives the disciples a warning – discipleship is not a walk in the park, it demands perseverance, trust, faith, hope and a deep inner conviction about our call and the promise of life for those who respond to the call. The rest of the Liturgy of the Word picks up on that theme and gives examples of the perseverance needed as well as the assurance of God's help.

Jeremiah, like all the prophets, knew what it meant to be faithful in proclaiming God's message. He encountered much opposition and persecution as he continued his ministry as prophet among God's people. Sometimes the struggle to be faithful to God's Word was overwhelming. As we read through the Book of Jeremiah, we hear Jeremiah complaining to God about the burden of the prophetic call: "O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. ...For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name, then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." (*Jer. 20:7-9*) Because of his faithfulness to God's Word, Jeremiah suffered imprisonment, persecution and the threat of death. In the face of all this opposition, he had to trust in God's abiding presence and love for him, and in the promise made when he was called to the prophetic ministry that God would be with him to strengthen him.

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us of all those who have gone before us in faith and are witnesses to God's faithfulness in order to encourage us in our own journey of faith. It is a word of encouragement for the times when we may experience the weight of our own sinfulness or inadequacy as obstacles to living our faith. It is also a reminder of all that Jesus did in order that we might have life, and therefore a challenge to be faithful ourselves. The example of the cloud of witnesses and of Jesus is put before us so that we "may not grow weary of lose heart". What in life today causes us to be weary or to lose heart? What particular gifts do we need in order to continue to be faithful and to respond to our baptismal call to be people of faith, caring for the gifts of creation, proclaiming the good news of salvation and sharing the gift of life with those around us? Do we take heart in the witness of those who have gone before us as well as those in our midst who continue to live out their baptism, or do we give up and simply take the easy way, not challenging our world or each other?

Jesus' words in the Gospel can be rather disturbing for any disciple, and especially for those who have grown comfortable and complacent. They are a challenge to all of us to reflect on our response to the call to discipleship. If we are being faithful in our discipleship, then we do not always agree with the wisdom of those around us and of the world, but rather challenge the attitudes of selfishness, self-centredness, greed, hatred, etc. and call for repentance and conversion. That is not an easy task, and not a ministry that is readily welcomed – look at Jeremiah in the first reading! Hebrews reminds us that Jesus was faithful in his ministry to the point of shedding his blood. God, who calls us, promises to be with us in our journey, to strengthen us for the mission to which we are called and to give eternal life to all who are faithful.

CREATION HIKERS

Our next hike is Saturday, August 25 and will take us up the Viking Ridge Trail east of Prince George. This is a strenuous mountain hike. Interested parties can contact Nadine at 563-4121 for more info!



REJOICING & REMEMBERING

We welcomed the following in the Sacrament of Baptism:



- Daniel Holloway
- Byron Holloway
- Emma M. A. Holloway
- Domenico J. Holloway
- Preston Dean William Case
- Solomon R. V. Flindall
- Rose Elizabeth Fulker

We witnessed the marriages of:



- Paul Jensen
- & Shannon Proudfoot
- Maurice Scarpino
- & Anna Hallum

CONGRATULATIONS!

Randy and Jacquie Ollenberger are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter

Bonnie Ollenberger to Tim Woolnough, son of Paul and Sheila Woolnough of Vanderhoof.

Wedding will take place on July 26, 2008.

PASTORAL TEAM

Richard: Can you believe it – August is more than half finished! Someone has been messing with the calendar and clock as far as I am concerned.

I continue to mess around in the dirt, building the flower garden and harvesting the vegetable garden. Oh, and there is a lot of parish and diocesan work too! August is booked with weddings every weekend, so that has made the month very interesting so far. Celebrating with couples as they begin their marriage is a real joy.

Future plans include a trip to Fort Ware August 26 to 30 for the last major pastoral visit until next summer. For the fall, winter and spring visits I fly up, which means only a day and a half in the village so these longer, drive-in visits are vital.

Giselle: It's been a busy couple of weeks. My parents, sister and little niece were up for about a week. My niece was baptized last weekend and it was good to have the whole family around for awhile, even if my brother-in-law couldn't make it. Talk about a full house!

Now that they're gone, things can get back to normal again. Which means more canning and gardening and hiking. I'm also trying to get some books read this summer, but there are so many outdoor activities to do! And Fall is coming quickly...

And of course, there are preparations for our fall programmes here at St. Mary's keeping me busy at work.

LAY FORMATION WANTS YOU!!

A new session of Lay Formation starts next month!! Lay Formation is a two year program, held one weekend a month for ten months each year. The focus is on learning more about our faith, the teaching of the Church, Scripture, Theology, ministry, liturgy, etc. It is a rich and exciting journey discovering in a deeper way what it means to be a member of the Church and a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The object of the program is to help participants grow in their faith as well as in understanding of their faith. For some, this means a greater involvement in the ministry of the parish. For others, it means involvement in other areas of our broader community. In any case, ministry is not the main focus of the program; growth in faith is the main focus.

Is your curiosity piqued? Brochures are available at the main entrance of the church in the brochure holders. You can also contact Susan Campbell at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre if you would like more information. Application forms are available from Fr. Richard. It is our hope that we can fill the upcoming session again—there is room for up to 20! Register now!



SACRAMENTALS: CANDLES

From ancient times, light has reminded people of all religions of divine presence, joy, happiness, goodness, purity, life, and a spirit of celebration. A symbolism of light entered Christianity from Jewish customs and pagan and civil ceremonies. In the Gospels, light becomes the symbol that describes the incarnate God in Jesus: "I am the Light of the world". As a result, Christians throughout the centuries have been preoccupied with lights.



Prior to electricity, light came from open flames, such as fires, candles and oil lamps. Early in the 2nd century, Christians used small oil lamps during their daily evening prayer service. Christians also carried candles in funeral processions, burned them at the tombs of martyrs and before relics and the images of saints.

The use of candles during the celebration of Mass only really got started during the 7th century, where they were used in the opening procession and gospel procession. In the 11th century, candles were placed on the altar for the first time.

Today, we burn candles to remind us of Christ's presence in our midst. Christ is the light of the world, the one who dispels the darkness. This is most powerfully expressed during the Easter Vigil, when each member of the assembly takes a lighted taper from the Easter Fire and all watch as the darkness is dispelled. We too are called to be light for others, not only physical lights, but spiritual lights as well.

SIN OF OMISSION

It isn't the thing you do, dear;
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun.

The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts tonight.

Margaret E. Sangster

FANS OF FILM

For those of you who like to watch movies & documentaries... we're going to be offering a movie night once a month (more or less). We thought we could start around 6:30 pm or so and order some pizza and beer to munch while we watch... More info coming soon.

EATING, WORKING AND MAKING LOVE ARE HOLY,
BUT WE FORGET TO LIVE THAT WAY

For Christians, ultimately the whole world is holy and everything in it, especially the physical, is potential material for sacrament. Our belief is that the universe shows forth God's glory, that each of us is made in God's image, that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, that the food we eat is sacramental and that in our work and in our sexual embrace we are co-creators with God.

That's a stunning belief, and it separates us from most other religions, where so much of the purpose of religion is to free oneself from the physical, the earth. But in Christianity, "the word becomes flesh," God enters into the physical and thus everything that is physical is potentially sacramental. It's noteworthy that Scripture, in that famous line about God becoming flesh, does not simply say that God became a man, a human being. It says more: "God becomes flesh," physical, earth. Therefore everything physical is potentially a sacrament.

But we struggle with this. Our daily lives are often so distracted, dazed and fixed upon things that seem unholy that the idea that everything is a sacrament can appear more like wishful thinking than theology. The world doesn't always show forth the glory of God, what we do with our bodies at times makes us wonder whether we really are temples of the Holy Spirit, the mindless way we so often eat and drink doesn't speak much of sacramentality, and the language we use to speak about our work, sex and our lives in general rarely hints at the fact that we are co-creators with God.

Why? Why aren't we more habitually alert to the fact that we are standing on holy ground and that our everyday activities come laden with sacrament?

There are many reasons, mostly rooted in the fact that we are human, that life is long, and that it isn't easy to sustain high symbols, high language and high ideals in the muck and grime of everyday life. Eating, working and making love should be holy, but too often we do them more for survival than for any sacramentality and "getting by" is about as high a symbol as we can muster on a weekday. I say this with sympathy. It isn't easy, day by day, hour by hour, to experience sacrament in the ordinary actions of our lives.

But there's another reason why we have lost the sense of sacramentality in our lives, namely, we have too little prayer and ritual around our ordinary actions. We too

seldom use prayer or ritual to connect our actions - eating, drinking, working, socializing, making love, giving birth to things - to their sacred origins. For example:

Among the Osage Indians, there's a custom when a child is born, before it is allowed to drink from its mother's breast, that a holy person, someone "who has talked to the gods," is brought into the room. This person recites to the newborn the story of the creation of the world and of terrestrial animals. Not until this has been done is the baby given the mother's breast. Later, when the child is old enough to drink water, the same holy person is brought back, this time to tell the story of creation and the sacred origins of water. Only after hearing this story is the child given water. Then, when the child is old enough to take solid foods, "the person who talked to the gods" is brought in again and this time tells the story of the origins of grains and other foods. The object of this is to teach the child that eating is not just a physical thing, but a religious one as well.

My parents and their generation did this too, in their own way: They had their fields and workbenches and bedrooms blessed, they prayed grace before and after every meal, and some of them would go into a church to propose marriage to another. That was their way of telling the story of the sacred origins of water before drinking it.

Today, by and large, we've lost both the way of myth of the Osage Indians and the way of piety of my parents. We live, eat, work and make love without these high symbols. Generally, we don't connect our food to its sacred origins, don't consider our work as co-creation with God, don't bless our workplaces and boardrooms, and would shrink at the very thought of blessing a bedroom where sex takes place.

We are the poorer for that, not just religiously, but humanly. When our everyday activities aren't sacramental, they soon become flat and we unconsciously compensate for that by increasing the dosage.

I'm not sure where we should go with all of this, since we are drawn neither to the myths or the piety of old, but unless we find prayer and rituals to connect our eating, working and making love to their sacred origins, ordinary life will remain just that, ordinary life, nothing special, just the muck and grime of slogging along.

Ron Rolheiser, omi—Copyright 2007. Reprinted from the Aug1, 2007 edition of The Prairie Messenger.



PRISON MINISTRY

Jesus told us that whenever we visit or care for those in prison, we are visiting or caring for him. While visiting prisoners may not be feasible for many people, there are ways in which we can still minister to those in prison.

Frank Jamin is the chaplain at the local correctional centre. He has expressed a need for bibles and other spiritual reading (e.g. prayer cards, booklets, Catholic Digest, etc). We have a basket on top of the Food Bank cabinet to collect material.



WEBSITE

Check out our website! We have lots of neat stuff there, and you can check out upcoming events.

www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg

FRUITS OF THE HARVEST

Are there any pickers or processors out there who don't have access to fruit but would like to pick some and make something out of it? Let us know. Apple season is here and there are several parishioners with loaded apple trees! Give the parish office a call and we can connect you with an apple source!! And if you have any fruit to give away, let us know too!



OUR WORSHIP SPACE: THE AMBRY

The word ambry is derived from the Latin armarium (cupboard or chest) and signifies the place where the vessels of oil used in celebrating sacraments are kept. These oils are blessed by the bishop at the Mass of Chrism celebrated during Holy Week and are brought to each parish church for the various rites of anointing. The three oils signify the universal charisms of the church for initiating (oil of catechumens), healing (oil of the sick) and consecrating (chrism).



As early as the sixth century, ambries were used to hold consecrated communion bread as well as the oils, and were often located in the base of the altar. By the thirteenth century, separate locked ambries were used for the eucharist only. This was an accepted practice by the sixteenth century, when this separate container was called a tabernacle. In the meantime, smaller amounts of the oils were stored in the sacristy, or in a simple wall niche or recessed cupboard known as an ambry.

As with all other vessels used in the liturgy today, the vessels for the oils should be of a quality and design that speak of the importance of the ritual actions. The vessels should hold an ample supply of the oils, thus symbolizing the generosity of God's gift. The gestures of anointing can then be performed with similar generosity of touch. The display of beautiful vessels reminds the community of the reverence it gives to its members as they are welcomed in baptism, confirmed in the spirit and anointed in their illness. To be anointed is to participate in an ancient biblical and ecclesial rite of blessing, and to enter into the mission of Jesus Christ, the anointed one of God.

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TABLE FOR TWO

Table for Two is an event that had great success this past year. We would welcome any people who would share their talents for cooking, serving or cleaning up for the evenings coming up this year. There are usually 10-14 guests, and 4 or 5 people working, which means that one cooks for up to 20 people. The evenings are a lot of fun, and community is built in the kitchen as well as the dining room!

HOSPITALITY

We would like to set up a Hospitality Group which would organize, set up and serve refreshments at our various gatherings (e.g. Anniversary Mass evenings). We need one to three people to serve as co-ordinator(s), who contact members of the larger group when an event is being planned.

Ideally, any event would be served by a fairly large group of people who would each have only a small task to perform. If you are interested in being part of this group, let us know!

THEO-TIDBITS

Our new season of Theo-Tidbits is in the works! If you check the bulletin boards, you'll see that we have our proposed schedule posted, along with some bookmark-schedules for you to take home. Pick one up today and see what interests you!!

NEW TO THE PARISH??

Are you new to the parish? We'd love to hear from you or meet you! Please introduce yourself to Fr. Richard or Giselle after Mass. Or you could take a moment and fill out a registration form located on our bulletin boards at the entrances of the church.