



Bringing Home the Word

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 5, 2016

Slowing Down for God

By Janel Esker

I've been teased over the years about how fast I walk. A work colleague even named me Flash for running by his office "in a flash" every day. He claimed no one wanted to get in my way for fear of being run over. I do walk quickly, and it probably has to do with my predilection for getting a lot done in little time. I'm all about efficiency.

But in my single-minded focus, I can miss opportunities to connect, help, or simply be present to someone—a colleague, my spouse, or even a stranger. When I take the time to stop,

I have remarkable moments of holy companionship.

Jesus, while not necessarily a divine speed walker, was heading into Nain in today's Gospel, probably with a particular destination in mind. He could have easily walked by the passing funeral procession. But Jesus was deeply moved by this grieving widow. Jesus not only interrupts his plans—he touches the woman's dead son, rendering Jesus ritually unclean.

Yet this risky action brings life—not just to the man, but also to his mother, whose legal standing in society was dependent on her son's. Her life is also restored.

Jesus' actions remind us that while our plans and projects are good, God is regularly found in interruptions—if we're willing to stop and risk reaching out. Instead of speeding past the homeless man, might we stop and invite him for a sandwich? Instead of deftly avoiding the coworker who always has family problems to share, might we take time to listen with real empathy?

Let the interruptions come—God may be bringing new life to someone through you. †

*“When I take the time to stop,
I have remarkable moments
of holy companionship.”*

A Word From Pope Francis

We all have within us some areas... that ...are a little dead; and some of us have many dead places in our hearts, a true spiritual necrosis! When we are in this situation, we know it, we want to get out but we can't. Only the power of Jesus...can help us....But if we become attached to these tombs and guard them within us and do not will that our whole heart rise again to life, we become corrupted...Let us hear that voice of Jesus who...says: “Come out! Leave that tomb you have within you. Come out. I give you life, I give you happiness, I bless you, I want you for myself.”



—Homily, April 6, 2014

Sunday Readings

1 Kings 17:17–24

“The word of the LORD comes truly from your mouth.”

Galatians 1:11–14a, 15ac, 16a, 17, 19

“The gospel preached by me is not of human origin....But it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Luke 7:11–17

“A great prophet has arisen in our midst.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What distracts me from my relationship with God?
- How might God be speaking to me through the interruptions in my life?

Catholic Calendar: St. Ephrem (June 9)

By Mary Lee Barron,
PhD, APRN, FNP-BC

What songwriter wouldn't be surprised to learn that someone would be singing her or his songs more than a millennium later? Think about how you feel when you hear a favorite song or hymn. Does the truth of the lyrics or the melody connect to something in your soul? We don't always come to know the truth by reading it. Sometimes it enters our hearts and souls through music or poetry. Saint Ephrem understood this, so that's exactly what he set out to do. Ephrem led the Church in understanding the importance of music and poetry in imparting the truth and invigorating the faith.

Pope St. John Paul II described the Church as having two "lungs": the Western and the Eastern Church. Saint Ephrem helps us breathe in the whole of our Catholic heritage. Pope Benedict XV declared him a doctor of the Church in 1920; he is the only Syrian so recognized. Not only did St. Ephrem compose hundreds of hymns, he served as a deacon, teacher, theologian, philosopher, and preacher.

Ephrem was born in Nisibis, near the eastern border of modern Turkey. He was likely from a Christian family. He functioned as deacon of Nisibis for most of his adult life. Nisibis was seized on three occasions and finally relinquished to the Persians by the Romans in a peace treaty. Christians had to leave the city.



Ephrem was exiled to Edessa, where he spent the last ten years of his life in a cave. He died in 373.

Syriac Christianity is a lyrical, poetic approach to theology. It is not an analytic approach to the Scriptures. For Ephrem, the point of reading the Bible was to induce contemplation. He believed that every word of the Lord has its own image; each of us hears and interprets those words in accordance with our own capacity and gifts.

False doctrines were rampant in Ephrem's time. Tradition tells us that Ephrem first heard heretical ideas in songs and, to counteract them, he made up his own hymns. Sometimes he used the same melodies.

Little is written about the role of women in liturgical worship in the early Church. Western scholars, particularly women, have developed a renewed interest in Ephrem's ideas. He believed

women had a rightful place in church choirs. Many of Ephrem's hymns were written for women's choirs, and he used extensive feminine imagery in his poetry. Jacob of Serugh, a sixth-century writer, referred to Ephrem as a "second Moses for women."

The Prayer of St. Ephrem, probably the most well-known of his writings, is used for days of fasting in Eastern Christianity:

*O Lord and Master of my life,
take from me the spirit of sloth,
meddling, lust of power, and idle talk.*

*But give rather the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience and love to thy
servant.*

*Yea, O Lord and King, grant me
to see my own sins and not to judge
my brother, for thou art blessed
unto ages of ages. Amen. †*

PRAYER

Lord, your love makes me whole.
Open my ears to hear your voice
amid all the noise and confusion
of life.

— From *Peaceful Meditations
for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 6–11

Mon. Weekday:
1 Kings 17:1–6 / Matthew 5:1–12

Tue. Weekday:
1 Kings 17:7–16 / Matthew 5:13–16

Wed. Weekday:
1 Kings 18:20–39 / Matthew 5:17–19

Thu. Weekday:
1 Kings 18:41–46 / Matthew 5:20–26

Fri. Weekday: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11–16 /
Matthew 5:27–32

Sat. St. Barnabas: Acts 11:21b–26; 13:1–3 /
Matthew 5:33–37

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