

Friday 4/30/2010 You are my Son; this day I have begotten you. Acts 13:26-33 Ps 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab Jn 14:1-6

There are some who read this who will understand much better than others. There is an experience that is like no other. It is the experience of a father at the birth of a child. "I am going to prepare a place for you..." has real meaning to us. Faith, hope, and love have a new and much deeper meaning, as do fear and trembling! We have caught a glimpse of the way we have come, and the way we are going, in how it impacts the way of another one; one who is small, and fragile, and dependent on us. It is the greatest lesson in life to discover our weakness, as we experience His strength, making it possible for us to be an instrument as He leads those we love, for whom we have such high hopes, into the faith that is the way the truth and the life.

Thursday 4/29/10 For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord. Acts 13:13-25 Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27 Jn 13:16-20

Contrary to popular belief, at least as it is evidenced by popular behavior, life in the Spirit is not a ramble from one "spiritual high" to another. It is the smooth even walk in hand with Him. Life in the Spirit is not a life lived in amazement at one miracle or another that one happens to witness from time to time. It is a steady stroll through a life of wonder at and witness to the constant miracle of His grace poured out every moment of every day. Life in the Spirit is not a life of being jerked from one spiritual insight to another. It is the calm and sure unfolding deeper and deeper of the astounding mystery of His love. Life in the Spirit is not something that happens to a person in moments of great ecstasy. It is the ecstasy that gradually and surely comes moment by moment as the reality of His love in all its wonderful dimensions begins to get a tiny toehold in a person's life. In the end, my experience of it is like taking a sip of the waters of Lake Superior. I may get a sense of its flavor and be refreshed, but its totality is infinitely beyond my knowing.

Wednesday 4/28/10 O God, let all the nations praise you! Acts 12:24—13:5a Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6 and 8 Jn 12:44-50

When you are "sent forth" by the Holy Spirit, how do you know what to say? You better stop and think about it for a minute! You had certainly better think about it before you open your mouth! It might be a good idea not to say anything unless it is what He tells you to say. Just remember and rejoice if you can do this because His commandment is eternal life, His word is the Word that saves.

Tuesday 4/27/10 All you nations, praise the Lord. Acts 11:19-26 Ps 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7 Jn 10:22-30 Sometimes things sound a whole lot more complicated than they really are. For example, there is a certain woman whom I love very much. She happens to be a coach, and many young people know her that way. She is also a daughter and that is how her parents know her. Some also know her as mother. Now she also happens to be my wife. Here is my question: when I love her, whom am I loving? Is it the coach? or the daughter? or the mother? or my wife? If you can ever figure it out, please let me know as I am very confused.

Monday 4/26/10 Athirst is my soul for the living God. Acts 11:1-18 Ps 42:2-3; 43:3, 4 Jn 10:1-10

How can you know His voice? There are so many voices. They seem to know what they are talking about. They seem to say what we want to hear, or at least what we expect. How do I know His voice. It is by faith you will know it. Faith and trust in Him will train your ears. Trust in no one and nothing else. You will know when He speaks, and He will speak very often and very plainly.

Saturday 4/24/10 How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good he has done for me? Acts 9:31-42 Ps 116:12-13, 14-15, 16-17 Jn 6:60-69

What is on my heart this morning is very difficult to write. It is difficult because it will be difficult for anyone to understand. It is difficult to understand because to understand it takes much more than a mental exercise, it requires "whole body" understanding. I suggest you take some time, maybe a few days or weeks, to consider the meaning of Psalm 116 for you. If you do, for the first few weeks you will no doubt rejoice in the depth and beauty of these images of the funeral of a faithful person. You will be blown away by the images of our faith as our legacy from our

ancestors and to our descendants. As you ponder the profound Eucharistic images no doubt your heart will be transported by the reality that we do not simply embrace our salvation, but actually "consume" it. As you begin to enter into the amazing depth of the images selected for today things that have always been confusing will begin to "make sense". I am convinced that you will begin to catch a glimpse of what it means to be "in the presence of the Lord". I am certain that "Hallelujah!" will be transformed from a response into a way of life. The pure and simple fact of the matter is that, due to His wonderful precious gift, we dwell in an un-fathomable ocean of His grace, and we always will.

Friday 4/23/10 Go out to all the world and tell the Good News. Acts 9:1-20 Ps 117:1bc, 2 Jn 6:52-59

Life in the Spirit is a life of going always deeper and deeper into life itself. Every sane person knows what he is doing and has a pretty good idea why. Life in the Spirit is the continual unfolding into our consciousness of the deeper whys that lie just beyond our understanding. Why would a bright young man set out on Saul's mission to Damascus. What sense could there be in throwing away a good career to track down a bunch of idiots wandering hysterically from place to place claiming to be eating the flesh and drinking the blood of their savior? Saul, though he thought he thought he did, did not really know why. No doubt, in his mind, he was nobely throwing his life into the breach to save his people from this spreading insanity. But what was the real reason he went? He was being led, and we all are being led, to a place where the Spirit could take hold of his life in a profoundly deeper way. That way for him, as I believe it does for all of us, leads directly into a life of loving service to one another by yeilding, every so gradually to the life in the Spirit He has in mind for us. This is the meaning of communion in the Body and Blood of Jesus, or is it? Could it be deeper? In a moment you will click off this machine or this screen and move on to something better. You will do something else. Do you know what you are doing? Do you know why?

Thursday 4/22/10 Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. Acts 8:26-40 Ps 66:8-9, 16-17, 20 Jn 6:44-51

There is special way that the Spirit of God speaks to us through one another. There is a rythm to the song of praise we sing together as we help each other listen to His voice in our hearts. These special encounters are ways that He feeds us with Himself through each other, slowly and surely building up the relationships of love that He is calling us into on the journey to our Father. Savor every bite.

Wednesday 4/21/10 Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. Acts 8:1b-8 Ps 66:1-3a, 4-5, 6-7a John 6:35-40

Joy is the one sure fruit of life in the Spirit of Jesus. I do not mean the joy that the world gives, which is always illusory and always comes with "strings attached." The joy of life in the Spirit is that incredible, deep, interior certainty of being loved by the Father, and it is the most freeing experience that a person can ever have. It is the profound certain knowledge that He will raise me on the last day. In the end, with that faith in Him comes our hope and the result is the love that can flow through us as we continuously present Him to our little world and our little world to Him.

Monday 4/19/10 Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord! Acts 6:8-15 Ps 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30 Jn 6:22-29

Well, there you have it! Miracles my get your attention, but they are not what it is all about. It is all about faith, and all about faith in Him alone. Faith in Him is the food that brings eternal life. Faith in Him is what makes a person's face "look like an angel's". Always remember that He taught us to say, "Thy will be done."

Saturday 4/17/10 Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you. Acts 6:1-7 Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19 Jn 6:16-21

Do you not understand? Every person has a certain understanding of himself. He sees himself in a certain way and he sees others as they relate to him. God is different. He sees each of us and all of us at the same time. He also sees what He is making of us, with us, and through us. That is

mostly hidden from us since our vision is so obscured by all that is close at hand. What He envisions is big, very, very big. He is the maker of the universe and it is not yet perfect. Seeing Him do things that seem impossible can be a little scary, until you consider the one who is doing them. Do not be afraid, it is Him.

Friday 4/16/10 One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord. Acts 5:34-42 Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14 Jn 6:1-15

There are always critics. Have you considered the possibility that these are the ones He is using you to love? He is using you to love them to pave the way for Him to enter their hearts. "Wait for the Lord with courage" is the best advice ever given to an apostle of Jesus.

Thursday 4/15/10 The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Acts 5:27-33 Ps 34:2 and 9, 17-18, 19-20 Jn 3:31-36

Listen carefully. Life in the Spirit is a life of obedience. It is a gifted life, and the greatest gifts are the opportunities we are given to be obedient. "Your will not mine be done." And there is a corollary. Do well in the small things and you will be given greater responsibility, more difficult opportunities to obey. So how can I know? What rule must I obey? He only gave us one command. Really, that is it. One simple command, and it only has three little words. "Love one another." Every opportunity to obey is hidden in an opportunity to love.

Wednesday 4/14/10 The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Acts 5:17-26 Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 Jn 3:16-21

Can this be real? If it is too good to be true it probably isn't. Right? No! It is true. There really is goodness. There really is hope. Life does have meaning. Somebody cares. Somebody cares about me. I am not alone. Knowing this and living in this knowledge makes a difference. Everything else is darkness. In total darkness, even the tiniest light shines brightly. One little glimmer and darkness is gone!

Tuesday 4/13/10 The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty. Acts 4:32-37 Ps 93:1ab, 1cd-2, 5 Jn 3:7b-15

This wonderful dialog with Nicodemus prefaces that famous Gospel verse Jn 3:16 "For God so loved....". This is the Gospel. Jesus, ever the patient sacrament of the Father, is breaking open for Nicodemus the experience of a sprouting life in the Spirit. As always He is not proclaiming new ideas, or giving personal directions or orders. Instead, as He always does, He points to the Father, and to the Scriptures and traditions, and brings them alive in the new light of Himself. As always, the bottom line is to lift Jesus up so that those who believe in Him can live in His Spirit, in the power of His Holy Name. This also the call to the Acts community of the first reading, and just as surely it is the same call for us today.

Monday 4/12/10

Saturday 4/10/10 I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me. Acts 4:13-21 Ps 118:1 and 14-15ab, 16-18, 19-21 Mk 16:9-15

Well there you have it. Today's verses clearly state your mission, and just as clearly lay out an example of what's in store for you when you go to work to proclaim the Gospel, skepticism. No one will believe you. They will say you are nuts, or deluded, or confused, or deceived, or arrogant. To them you will always be too bad or, at the very best, too good to be believed. You will always be a hypocrite! After all, who can possibly love as He loved. The skeptics and cynics will always continue with their faith in their own incantations or in their own schemes and labors, until that very blessed day when He himself appears in their midst. Life in the Spirit is no exercise in being Jesus. It is the commitment to be yourself, the pest that you are, and rejoice in the ridicule you receive! Every doubt or dart thrown your way is one more sign of the wonderful blessings another will receive when Jesus finally appears face to face with those skeptics He has sent you to pester. Joy is learning to live with the fact that you are generally 99% wrong! Just keep speaking about what you have seen and heard, keep pointing always to Him, and watch what happens.

Friday 4/9/10 The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. Acts 4:1-12 Ps 118:1-2 and 4, 22-24, 25-27a Jn 21:1-14

Oh, how wonderful is your Name! There is no other Name in all the earth! Your Holy Name! Jesus! What an amazing wonderful message of Eucharist in the little story in today's Gospel. Things have changed. He has made all things new. How many times before His death did Jesus confound them, and us, with images of food, but not just the food, but the eating it together! Eating with sinners, not making His followers wash their hands, letting them get food on the Sabbath, healing a woman so she can feed them; so many images of food and eating. Then the multiplication of bread and fishes, and it was in their consumption that they were multiplied. Now here it is again. Jesus, with one final lesson, after a long night of fruitless labor, they finally listen to Him. They finally "do as He says." The result: they come back with one hundred fifty three large fish, a representation of every nation on earth. And they come back to share the breakfast He has prepared for them. To me, the message is very clear. When they asked Him to send the people away He said, "You feed them." Then He made it possible for them to feed a large number. Now He says to them, "Bring them to me." Then He feeds us all, "He took the bread and gave it to them." What does this speak to me today? "Bring some of the fish you just caught."

Thursday 4/8/10 O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth! Acts 3:11-26 Ps 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9 Lk 24:35-48

Why are people so amazed by miracles? It certainly is not because miracles are uncommon. Open your eyes. Just what single thing do you see that you can understand? What single thing that you think you understand can you even begin to explain to others? We are awash in miracles. Everywhere we look we see miracles. They are very ordinary. They are normal. They mean absolutely nothing at all. Jesus, the real miracle; Jesus, alive and very close; Jesus is the miracle. Get to know Him. You will live in constant amazement.

Wednesday 4/7/10 The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Acts 2:36-41 Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22 Jn 20:11-18

Well now, here you have lesson no. 1 in discipleship; Look for Jesus, see Jesus, tell the others you have seen Him, and report what He has told you. You are now ready for graduate school.

Tuesday 4/6/10 The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Acts 2:36-41 Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22 Jn 20:11-18

Well now, here you have lesson no. 1 in discipleship; Look for Jesus, see Jesus, tell the others you have seen Him, and report what He has told you. You are now ready for graduate school.

Monday 4/5/10 Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope. Acts 2:14, 22-33 Ps 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11 Mt 28:8-15

Discernment is the real and powerful work of the Holy Spirit. It is so often a moment by moment thing, and there is a very good reason, everyone has free will. He does show us the "paths of life", but our vision is not always 20/20. Life in the Spirit means always being ready to be amazed, corrected, and ultimately converted, as He uses us as channels of His truth and love. To me it is always better to hear the whole story. Check out Acts 2:15-21. People may think you are drunk, or crazy, or stupid, or brainwashed. It's OK, so long as they are wrong, and so long as you keep praying. And remember, being brainwashed is not altogether bad for those who have a dirty mind!

Saturday 4/3/10 No response...no readings...no mass...no Jesus?

How can I live without you? I can remember a time before I met You. It is only a dim memory. It is time I long to forget, time I need to forget. But it is only a mental exercise, You are not really gone. You call me into the memory of the painful time only to deepen my understanding of your presence every beat of my heart.

Friday 4/2/10 Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Is 52:13—53:12 Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25 Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jn 18:1—19:42

At birth we, each one of us, enter into a journey. There are many passages we must make along the way. But there is one special passage that, in a way, we are all here to help each other make. In all the history of mankind there have only been a very, very few who have not made or will not make this passage. Isn't it truly awesome, and amazing, and wonderful beyond belief that Jesus is not one of them.

Thursday 4/1/10 Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ. Ex 12:1-8, 11-14 Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18 1 Cor 11:23-26 Jn 13:1-15

God is at work all the time in our communion with one another. In working with the Pre-Catechumens we start each session with a Psalm. Last night I planned to go through the story of Jesus' passion with the children so I selected Psalm 22. When I arrived a little eight year old opened her bible and asked "Can we do Psalm 116 tonight?" Of course I said "We will do Psalm 22." Despite a tiny frown, she agreed and we went on with our lesson. Can you imagine the feelings I experienced this morning on perusing the readings? Our little incident with the Psalms came at the end of a day that had started with Steve Bollman's TMIY session on the power of the Eucharist and a powerful sharing with a small group of friends on the Eucharist in our lives.

Now I gave the kids a very good "story" of the Passion, and it was followed by a very good discussion of its meaning in our lives, but I am haunted by what we may have missed. What wonderful profound messages did He have in store for us all in the wisdom of that little girl? "Our blessing cup is a communion..." Discernment is a moment by moment wonder. I am convinced I made the wrong decision last night, but I am just as convinced that, since both choices were very good ones, all is well. Life in the Spirit is very often many steps on the level path we are accustomed to and ready for until we are able and wise enough to take a little step deeper into being led by Him. In the end it is all good.