

Reflection for July 20, 2020

Judith Bonini, IHM

The first reading today, expresses the anguish of God, “O my people, what have I done to you, or how have I wearied you?” In the Gospel, Jesus is pained to be again requested to perform a sign. Looking back, from our perspective, we wonder why they did not **see** what was right in front of them.

Certainly, the Scribes and Pharisees instructed in the law and the Scriptures are aware of the commandment to love God above all things and their neighbor as themselves. They could refer the passages that offer the Commandments; even today’s passage from Micah, “to act justly, love tenderly, serve others and walk humbly with God.”

Jesus spent his days healing the sick, feeding the hungry, bringing justice to the afflicted, loving the poor. Is he not a living example of the word from Micah? But no, here they are again looking for a sign, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”

What about the miracles he already worked, did they not count? Jesus manifests extraordinary fidelity to a ministry of kindness and concern, but they want more than the cure of a cripple or the blessed wisdom of being poor in spirit.

Jesus calls them to judgment, he says “you’re looking for proof, but you are looking for the wrong kind. All you want is something to titillate your curiosity and satisfy your lust for miracles. The only proof you are going to get is what looks like the absence of proof: Jonah evidence. Even the people of Nineveh repented at the word of Jonah and a far greater than Jonah is here – and **you** quibble about ‘proofs.’”

Often, we want miracles from God. Unless we take the risk of being generous toward others, no miracle will prove anything to us. We must choose to enter the depths and let ourselves be swallowed by God’s will and taken in God’s unknown direction.

In these days of uncertainty and chaos, what is it that we are not **seeing**?

Certainly, the pandemic has made clearly visible the issue of inequality. Fr. Bryan Massingale comments, “there is no way to tell the truth about race in this country without white people becoming uncomfortable. Because the plain truth is that if it were up to people of color, racism would have been resolved, over and done, a long time ago. The only reason for racism’s persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it.”

Are we **aware** that **race, ethnicity and language spoken** have the strongest relation to the longstanding violation and ineffective enforcement of our drinking water laws?

Do we **notice** that these same groups of people also have the highest risk for the development of Alzheimer’s? Will we **acknowledge** that our abundance is provided by the labor of the poor and broken ones? Can we **see** the Crucified One in the deaths of Covid-19 patients and the suffering of their families?

We limited in many ways. But are we willing to stand with the poor, the victimized, those destroyed by violent systems of injustice? Or will the people of Nineveh rise up and condemn us?