

Judith **Bonini, IHM**

Homily

February 28, 2022

In her commentary on Mark's gospel, Megan McKenna notes, that in Chapter 10 Mark offers a short primer on what is essential to become a follower of Jesus. There are teachings about faithfulness in marriage, children, and today's reading which could be titled "the undisciple". A person came to Jesus looking for a Google map to eternal salvation, who when shown it went away sad.

Today, I would like to focus on the first reading. Peter says "Although you have not seen (God) you love God; even though you do not see God now, yet you believe in (God) and you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy."

Let us address the words love and joy, feelings we experience but find hard to talk about. Genesis tells us that we are created in God's own image and likeness. It is difficult for us to know how to love God, whom we can neither see, nor hear or touch. Jesus, in his life on, earth, modeled for us how to love his Abba.

We have learned that creation is perpetual and absolute. If God stopped loving us or the universe into existence, we/it would disappear. You, I, and the universe are the Body of God; this Infinite Love that is Reality giving Itself away. This is true of all creation, it is true of us. God is the Reality of our life, without whom we are NOTHING at all. We are empowered to assent to it because love is never imposed.

Thomas Merton says "There is that in you, no one can destroy or diminish because it belongs completely to God." Teresa of Avila calls it "the infinite preciousness of yourself in your fragility."

Peter says, when we believe we "rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy" Do we experience joy in our lives? These days joy might be hard to find. The question is: Do we recognize Joy when she appears?

Ruth Gendler, in her book, describes JOY in this way:

"Joy is spontaneous,

She is in love with life all of it.

Joy is immensely patient, has no need to rush,

She knows that every moment is the perfect moment.

Joy is not concerned with success or failure or how to make things permanent.

Sometimes, she is elusive disappearing as we approach her.

The distance between us seems to be enormous, we wonder

if the effort to reach her is worth it.

Yet she waits for us.

Her desire to walk with us is as great as our longing to accompany her.

How will God surprise you with love, and joy today?

J. Ruth Gendler