

The Light Breaking Through

Homily for September 1, 2021

After the heavy rain of yesterday afternoon I went walking around 7:30 last evening. The sun had broken through the clouds as it was setting, and the sky was a remarkable tapestry of both colours and shapes. Cloud formations and the hues of light created a canvas of remarkable beauty.

As I was praying through the readings for today's Mass they captured a similar quality as the Tuesday evening sky. Jesus goes to the home of Simon Peter where Peter's mother-in-law is sick with a high fever. Upon healing her, she ends up serving, and then in turn many others, whose lives are characterized by turbulence and stormy environments come to him and Jesus heals them. In each of these encounters it is, so to speak, as if the sun is breaking through into the clouds of peoples' suffering. The resulting beauty then attracts more and more people to Jesus. So captivated are they the request is made for him to stay in the region of Capernaum. But "no", says Jesus, "I need to move onto the other cities and towns so that the sun of the grace of God's loving presence can break through their stormy skies as well".

This image of the light shining into the troubling circumstances of our lives is expressed vividly in the Collect for today's Mass.

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, so that they may return to the right path.

Stop there for a moment and think about this. God is always shining his light into our darkness so that those who have wandered from the Lord, or perhaps never known him, may join us on the path of the Lord. The Collect goes on to pray for those who are seeking to follow Jesus along the way in these words:

Give all who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and strive after all that does it honour.

Notice the governing word of this prayer: "grace". Grace, like the sun that broke through the clouds after a late summer storm. Grace that is the gift of Jesus' love for you and me, that allows us to more intentionally stay on the right path, where we reject what is contrary to the name of Christ and strive after all that does it honour.

Such grace was clearly at play in the community to which Paul addressed his Colossians letter. Paul celebrates that the Gospel in Colossae is bearing fruit. Listen to the reason he gives:

so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷ This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,¹

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#). (1989). (Col 1:6–7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

These people were so attracted to Jesus, just like the people in Capernaum, because when they heard the Gospel as taught to them by Epaphras they comprehended the grace of God. That is they sat up and took notice, like my marveling at the evening sky. Notice as well that Epaphras is a beloved servant and faithful minister of Christ on your behalf. How I feel beloved by you St. Peter's family and I want to grow in fostering a community where together we are faithful ministers of Jesus on behalf of those who are walking this path with us.

We also want to invite others onto the path who for any number of reasons have strayed from it. Such is the particular vocation of the Church at this time where amidst the turbulent skies characteristic of these days we can inspire each other to say with the psalmist:

I am like a green olive tree in the house of Gd. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever.

Beloved, it is together as a community gathered around Jesus that we can be a stable manifestation of his grace in this part of the northwest. Unlike Jesus we do not need to move on. But like Jesus and Epaphras we want many to come to know Jesus as his light breaks through into their lives and more fully into ours. Nothing is more important than to comprehend his Gospel and so be enamored by the multi-textured and coloured grace that radiates from Jesus.