

5th Sunday of Easter - 2019

If you were to imagine for a moment what it means to be glorified, I wonder what images would come to mind.

When I think of the glory of the Lord, the first image that comes to me is of the shepherds in the story of Jesus' birth. St. Luke writes "*The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.*"

I imagine something stupendous going on—something on the order of the northern lights, or a meteor shower brightening up the sky

The shining glory of the Lord seems to have been present when Moses came down from Mount Sinai after spending forty days in communion with the God of his ancestors. In Exodus we read:

As Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, he did not know that the skin of his face had become radiant while he spoke with the LORD. When Aaron, then, and the other Israelites saw Moses and noticed how radiant the skin of his face had become, they were afraid to come near him.

Maybe there's something of the glory of the Lord going on in how we portray the saints. They have halos which indicate their holiness—and maybe the glory of the Lord shining out from them.

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When it comes to Jesus, though, those kinds of images are reserved for just one occasion—when he took Peter, James and John up the mountain and was transfigured before them.

In the ordinary exercise of his mission we don't see any evidence of that. It seems that he came across in a more normal fashion.

Glorifying God and being glorified by him must mean something else.

St. John places the moment that Jesus is glorified right after Judas left the last supper. The moment does not seem to be anything near a shining moment, which may be just the point St. John is getting at.

From the beginning of the Last Supper John has shown Jesus' glory, not by shining moments, but by portraying him as the servant, willing to place himself in that position regardless of the worthiness of the person being served.

Jesus washes the feet even of Judas. He offered himself fully to the one who was about to betray him.

That act really captures in a nutshell the whole reality of Jesus' passion: it reveals the glory of God, whose faithfulness to frail and sinful human beings cannot be overcome, not even by betrayal on the part of Jesus' closest friends or the chosen people.

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God's glory is the act of loving that nothing can diminish.

That perspective goes a long way in helping us see the things that really matter in our living out of the Christian calling.

It can't only be about all the extraordinary stuff. It's essentially important that the major quality of the Christian journey can be found in the ordinary events of our lives where we spend most of our time and energy.

Jesus glorifies God and is glorified by him in the choice to remain faithful to the call to love.

That's a call we can easily recognize. I doubt that there's anyone who cannot come up with the concrete circumstances in their life where the call to be steadfast in love and caring for others is present.

According to St. John, Being steadfast in his love is the primary way that Jesus glorifies God and is glorified by him. And that virtue is available to us.

In that same evening Jesus tells the disciples as much: "What I have done for you, you must also do for one another.

Glory. As in steadfast commitment, faith, humble service. In a word, love. When these are the elements of our faith life, we can be certain that we are glorifying God and that God's glory is shining through in us, whether anyone can see our halo or not.