

26th Wednesday II

JOB 9:1-12, 14-16

Job answered his friends and said: I know well that it is so; but how can a man be justified before God? Should one wish to contend with him, he could not answer him once in a thousand times.

God is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who has withstood him and remained unscathed?

He removes the mountains before they know it; he overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth out of its place, and the pillars beneath it tremble. He commands the sun, and it rises not; he seals up the stars.

He alone stretches out the heavens and treads upon the crests of the sea. He made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south;

He does great things past finding out, marvelous things beyond reckoning.

Should he come near me, I see him not; should he pass by, I am not aware of him; Should he seize me forcibly, who can say him nay? Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

How much less shall I give him any answer, or choose out arguments against him! Even though I were right, I could not answer him, but should rather beg for what was due me.

If I appealed to him and he answered my call, I could not believe that he would hearken to my words.

PSALM 88:10BC-11, 12-13, 14-15

*Daily I call upon you, O LORD;
to you I stretch out my hands.
Will you work wonders for the dead?
Will the shades arise to give you thanks?*

*Do they declare your mercy in the grave,
your faithfulness among those who have
perished?*

*Are your wonders made known in the
darkness, or your justice in the land of
oblivion?*

*But I, O LORD, cry out to you; with my
morning prayer I wait upon you. Why, O
LORD, do you reject me; why hide from me
your face?*

LUKE 9:57-62

*As Jesus and his disciples were proceeding
on their journey, someone said to him, "I
will follow you wherever you go."*

*Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens
and birds of the sky have nests, but the
Son of Man has nowhere to rest his
head."*

*And to another he said, "Follow me."
But he replied, "Lord, let me go first and
bury my father." But he answered him,
"Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go
and proclaim the Kingdom of God."*

*And another said, "I will follow you, Lord,
but first let me say farewell to my family
at home." Jesus answered him, "No one
who sets a hand to the plow and looks to
what was left behind is fit for the
Kingdom of God."*

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“No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God.”

In your life, have you ever found yourself in moments like, “now or never”? Have you ever found yourself facing “the point of no return”?

I’ve had those kinds of moments. A proposal of marriage is something like that. A nuptial ceremony is exactly like that.

I had another such moment 9 years ago. I had been ordained for a few years and working full-time for the Diocese in Safe Environment and part-time in campus ministry.

It was made known that a near-by parish on the Eastside of Kalamazoo would be looking for a new pastor in a few months. This was a parish that I had gotten to know over the years. My wife, Jan (remember that nuptial ceremony?) had taught at their parish school when we were newlyweds. My youngest son attended youth group at that parish. I knew the parish to be a warm family parish known throughout the area for its hospitality.

I was also familiar with the neighboring community. I had served the Eastside Neighborhood in community policing. I played McGruff at their National Night Out celebrations. I was familiar with the good people there, how they had gone through tough times and worked together in community development in making the Eastside a good place to raise families.

And yet the immigrant Poles who had built St. Mary’s and the homes on the Eastside no longer lived there. Current parishioners commuted to the parish, not really being familiar those living on neighboring streets.

As I looked at it, these were two great groups of good-hearted people who really needed only to be introduced to each other. I prayed about it. I consulted with other spiritual advisors. It became clearer and clearer to me.

I worked on my “offer” to the Bishop... over and over. I finally finished my request for assignment to that parish with hopes of new evangelization and engagement with the community.

I attached the request to an email, addressed it to the Bishop, and was ready to go.

I remember being poised over the keyboard. All I had to do was hit “send”. I knew that once I hit “send”, that whatever happened, nothing would be the same again.

“No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God.”

Jesus calls you. You might not understand the fine print, but don't let the lack of clarity be an excuse for procrastinating. God has a way of not giving you the whole plan. Sometimes he allows you a vision of the end game; sometimes he only shares one step at a time. That can be frustrating... I know... I've been there.

And yet, what is offered is nothing less than the Kingdom of God.

This is the Kingdom of Paradise of adoration before the unveiled face of God, where:

There shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain (Rev 21:4)

This is:

*Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven. (Mt 6:10)*

We were created and destined for eternity.

We were created and graced with God's loving presence here and now.

Put your hand to the plow and follow Jesus, now and unto eternity.

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