



Reflection from Deacon Ross Beaudoin

“You are my help, O God!”

I don't know what your reactions are to the events and “news” of recent weeks. My overall reactions have tended to be “Here we go again...” and “What's this *really* about...?” Also, I must confess I spend far too much time pursuing “news” stories of all sorts. There just might be something brewing that I wouldn't want to miss. Sure....

In each of our three readings this Sunday we encounter people who dealt with the realities of their own day. They couldn't consult news stories, they were the news stories, though they wouldn't have recognized it.

In the reading from the Prophet Jeremiah, we find that Jeremiah has angered the ruling powers by predicting the destruction of Jerusalem – because of the sins of the people. Those in power didn't want to hear that, so they decided to throw Jeremiah down a cistern to get rid of him.

In the Letter to the Hebrews we hear of early believers who were growing weary of the struggle to live lives of integrity in line with the teachings of Jesus. The author of Hebrews reminds those believers that their ancestors (“a great cloud of witnesses”) withstood multiple trials and lived their lives according to their faith. Those early believers were also reminded that even Jesus endured trials and opposition – “to the point of shedding his blood.”

Finally, in the gospel we have a disturbing picture of families divided by their differences over accepting the message of Jesus. When one became a Christian at that time, it meant separating from the “civil religion” of the emperor – who had become “divine” in the culture. That caused a disruption in many families.

These three readings serve as a *reality therapy* for me. Since the earliest ages good people have dealt with conflict and suffering while trying to live out their faith in God. There have also been times of great enlightenment and joy. It seems to me only realistic to expect both as part of our human life.

So, back to the unrelenting “news” that we are provided every day. The stories may interest us or not; some may really rivet our attention. And while we are curious about all the drama that may be presented, the realities and relationships of our own lives are where we live. Is there something in these news stories that resonates with our personal lives – by comparison or contrast? What do we see unfolding that might help us see our own life in a clearer light? Is someone struggling to align their experiences with their faith? Is someone possibly leaving their belief on the side of the road to pursue a different course? And we?

The readings today highlight the need to be able to accept struggle and opposition in order to remain faithful to our calling. Can we accept that, or are we hoping we can achieve peace of mind and union with God and each other without any effort or struggle?

Today's Psalm 40 summarizes for us.

Lord, come to my aid! I have waited, waited for the Lord, and he stooped toward me.

The Lord heard my cry. He drew me out of the pit of destruction.... The Lord put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.

Though I am afflicted and poor, yet the Lord thinks of me.

You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, hold not back!

*Peace,
Deacon Ross*