



Reflection from Ben Babaran

The three Scripture readings assigned for this Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time speak about being attentive and listening to the prophet whom God will send.

In St. Mark's Gospel, Jesus entered the synagogue and he taught and everybody is saying, "I wonder what he said." But, Mark won't tell us. Mark is not telling us what he said for some strange reason, but later on we begin to understand.

You see the Kingdom of God is not a book. It is not a series of lectures. It is not a place. The Kingdom of God is a person! And what do people do when they communicate the great truths of God? They teach it. And they live it!

So in Mark, right from the very beginning, he's telling us not so much what Jesus says. Mark asks us to watch what he does. Then, we will understand that the Kingdom of God is among us.

Thus, be attentive and listen!!!

In this trip to the Philippines, that challenge has been echoed in the people I have met each day. Each has something to say to me in what they do in life –service, hosting, preparing food, cleaning—in humility, kindness, generosity, and simplicity.

It is not just people who communicate the great truths of God. Nature does! The Philippine scenes I have taken for granted growing up have communicated to me the beauty, majesty, and power of God. The planet we live in is beautiful, bucolic, dazzling, and captivating. Earth is asking me to change, clean up my mess, promote conservation means, and live in reciprocity to Earth. God continually blesses each day through His creation. And for Earth to stay in balance, and for the God's gifts to continue to flow, I must give back in equal measure for what I enjoy and what is given me each day.

Gratitude is my offering back to the love I have received from people I have met and from God's creation.

Peace - Ben