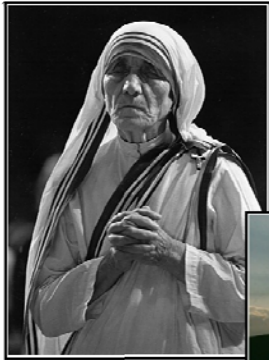


Review Week

Pausing to Review the Graces We Have Received

A Week of Review: “He Calls Me”



As we journey in the retreat, we pause to stay awhile with the graces being offered us. Before moving ahead to hear and see Jesus and fall more deeply in love with Jesus in his life and ministry, I pause to savor what has just happened. I walk around with a deep sense of peace this week.

“He calls me.” Throughout the week, I let myself experience these words more and more deeply. “He wants me. He needs me. He wants me to be with him. He invites me into his own experience of being called, of being servant. And I’m feeling that I want it very much. I want to be with him so much. There is something here that is different, that feels wonderful, that gives me new energy, a new freedom.”

We remember that in this review we will not be going to take on new material. It involves pausing to let myself catch up with what has been happening in me, with what I have been given, with what I have been excited by, with what I have been saying “yes” to. It is a simple week, with the same patterns of previous weeks. I’ll continue to pause when I wake and give thanks at the end of the day. I’ll still use the in-between times, the background times of my day, to refocus and be attentive to what is going on. This week, however, it becomes simpler and more peaceful. I may just pause from time to time and take a deep breath and smile as I remember some aspect of the previous weeks as it relates to what is going on in my life today. I may face something difficult, experience with more conscious awareness some part of my life’s commitment, or just notice that this moment is one that is extremely ordinary and routine. If I pause and slowly breathe the word *yes*, the graces of these past weeks become renewed and deepened.

Our desire continues in the same way. In our pausing this week, we will experience how we can grow in our desire. As I appreciate the depth of the invitation offered me, the more intensely I want to move forward and let Jesus show me the rest of his life. My desire to be with him and to be like him grows the more I am attracted to him who has loved me so much.

Some Practical Help for Getting Started This Week

The most practical reminder for getting in to this week is to let it be simple. It is a part of our busy world to think that because nothing *big* and stimulating is going on, nothing is going on. That assumption leads to restlessness and an inattention to the subtle movements in our hearts.

Perhaps I need to wake each morning and pause at the side of my bed and say, "I just want to appreciate what has been given me, offered me." Those words, or any others that come from my heart, will help me focus my day around attention and gratitude. Then the subtler things that were perhaps overlooked or underappreciated can rise to the surface. Remembering keeps graces alive. Throughout this week, look back at important moments in my ordinary life these past weeks. Review the graces that were there in a brief background experience. If there was some experience, feeling, thought, prayer, that especially stirred my heart, I can return there and enjoy it at a deeper level in a new context this week.

Being re-collected is really just a simple process of collecting what is really valuable and important, over and over. Our lives are being filled with grace these weeks as we are drawn, by love, into the life of the one who invites us to join him in his own mission.

For the Journey: Pondering His Ways

When going on a journey, we would want to have made arrangements, procured maps, made reservations. With all these things done, we might still wonder whether we are on the right highway and whether we really want to stay here or go there.

This week we are encouraged to pull off the highway to check things over before continuing this following of Jesus. There are some important questions to be answered. We might be asking Jesus some, and we might be asking ourselves some others. These questions are prayerful even if they might seem a bit doubting and distrustful. The newly called fishermen did not seem to have any questions or doubts when Jesus first called them, but as we read on in their relationship with Jesus, they had many. They did not know what lay ahead for them, but as they bumped into problems and challenges, they would turn to Jesus with puzzled faces and say things like, "Don't you care? We're sinking!"

So we pray for comfort as we review and preview. The call of the Gospels and the Spiritual Exercises is both to come and see and then to go and do. So what have we seen these past weeks of this sacred journey? What of his ways are delightful or disappointing? Perhaps when contemplating his birth, the sense of humiliating poverty was too dramatic for us. Watching and listening to Jesus being told that he was the Beloved was a great consolation, because we are, in him, the beloved of God as well. There are some serious implications to being the beloved, and perhaps we would rather be a little removed from such intimacy.

However we find ourselves reflecting with such questions, they do provide us with a prayerful agenda. However we find ourselves, God does too and is always laboring to encourage us through our doubts to trust. "Fear not," God says to those whom God has called in the past. "Fear not," Jesus says to us. Fear not our truth, our questions, our doubts or resistance. As with the early apostles, when bumping into Jesus, we are bumping into ourselves. We can become a bit discouraged with ourselves, for after being prayerfully attentive these past weeks, we can find ourselves still burdened by the "old leaven." Jesus loves us the way he finds us, and while this can be embarrassing, it is how Jesus most encountered people, in their seemingly humiliating truth.

There is a future calling into life as well. This week we might pray with our desires to go on or the sense that this has gone far enough. We know that once Peter allowed Jesus into his boat, Peter's life was

changed more than Peter could imagine. There were many who found his ways and teachings hard to hear and took other roads. Jesus invites and not demands. Jesus has love to share with all of us no matter what our responses might be. Jesus requests and not requires.

This week we pray with our usual fears of wanting to know the future, the specifications, and the success rate. The grace of God reverences what is natural to us, and so it is very important to pray simply with those fears, humbling though they may be. His teachings, his way of relating, his pattern of responding, all are a little different from our usual ways. He lived freely his identity. He works to offer us such freedom, but our ways are so familiar and his so new. This week we pray with our own Scriptures, our own record of Jesus' actions in our lives. We will see more next week of the strangeness, yet attractiveness of his style. This week we rest with our histories of faith, doubt, listening, desires, and frailty. "The favors of the Lord are not all in the past. Every morning they are being renewed."

In These or Similar Words . . .

Dear Jesus,

I feel like I want more. More what? More of you in my life. A deeper connection. I want to spend more time with you—like I do someone I love deeply. I want to learn from you, to imitate the way you live, to listen closely to what you are asking me.

I look back on the last week, and I realize how much I am inspired by you, and how something deep within me is stirred to want to do more with my life for you. You are calling me and I feel it inside and I want to drop everything and go with you.

But even with my strongest desires, I still face the fact that I am so very human and flawed. Even in the midst of serving you this week, I recognize how the pull to riches, honor, and glory can pull me away from you. You are so grounded in poverty and humility, and yet I continue to find myself turning away from you—turning instinctively toward the honors and glory. That's not the way to find you. But this time, I don't turn away from you in shame. With you holding my hand, I look at what happened this week and I see my flaws and I know you see them too. You know me so well and you love me—even with all my imperfections.

Dear Jesus, I want to take a rest from the struggle. Let me sit at your feet and gaze up at you. I hear you and am moved. My heart is on fire as I imagine myself in your service. I know that you chose Peter as the leader of your apostles. He was a man with so much imperfection and so much heart. Please—I ask you, Lord. Lead me the way you led Peter. Befriend me and let me feel your love for me. Let me spend my days with you, learning as you teach and watching as you heal. And when I find myself distracted by the dazzle of riches and honors, let me remember how much you loved Peter and how you love me. Jesus, I want to give my life to you. I want to follow you and be with you always. I want to love you as much as I feel your love.

I tremble in gratitude as I say thank you for wanting the same thing.