

6th Sun. Ord. Time (B)
St. Athanasius and St. Francis Parishes
February 14, 15, 2015

Even before I left for my vacation days, I knew that the first weekend back in the parish would be one filled with a variety of matters. In the Introduction to today's Liturgy you heard about the special things that will be a part of our liturgy this afternoon (this morning). My thoughts centered on 'how would there be time for some reflection on the Word of God amid all the other things that were falling into place for this weekend?

The First Scripture and the Gospel raise the topic of who we accept and who we do not accept into our group ... be that church, social, or civic. I still remember living in one community where it was made quite clear that if you weren't at least in the middle to upper middle class economically, you might want to look for housing in a nearby town. So one topic for reflection today could be about whom we accept and whom we do not accept into our lives and communities.

But through some reading prior to leaving on vacation, I discovered some Scripture and homily commentators addressing how once again Jesus commands someone to secrecy. In the gospel two weekends ago, Jesus imposed secrecy on the demon that had possessed a man. In today's gospel story Jesus does the same to the man with leprosy. There are many theories about why Jesus does this even when he knows the injunction to secrecy will not be kept. I don't feel the homily is the best forum in which to examine such theories. But in a homily we can ask "how do those upon whom Jesus imposes such secrecy know so convincingly that Jesus was God? How did the man with leprosy, how did even the demon, know that they were in the presence of God? Or more to the point of our situation here today,

Will the families seeking baptism for their children today know they are in the presence of God? And how will they know this?

Will the men recognized for their journey in the RCIA process and whom we send on to the Archbishop, know they are in the presence of God? And, how will they know that for themselves?

When have I, and when have you, known without much doubt, that we are, or have been, in the presence of God? How and why have I known this? How and why have you known this?

Will you still be so sure about the presence of God in your life, when at the end of the coming season of Lent, you must face once again that this same Jesus, this same God, who seemed so powerful and in command, suffered and died for you on the cross, suffered and died for me, on the cross?

Good thoughts for going into the week of ashes, and for thinking about during the entire season of Lent.