

Pastoral Reflection
July 31, 2022
18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

“Do YOU Know What’s in YOUR Closets?!”

This email question from Kim & Dan made me smile sheepishly. I have a number of tote bags in my closet. I have no idea what is in them. I am not even sure what clothes I have in my chest of drawers or clothes closet. This made me think about the readings for this week – how I accumulate stuff.

Our cultural way of thinking we need bigger, better, and more, of hoarding riches for ourselves, is a long-standing human inclination. Jesus was one of many prophets and religious teachers who challenged the people about how riches can cause them to lose perspective, to miss what is most important in life. The things we accumulate are not lasting and can disappear in a few minutes. Qoheleth, a name that means preacher or collector of wisdom, raises the same question in the third century BCE, in the book of Ecclesiastes, part of the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures. Other ancient writers also challenged people who would claim any absolute values in this life, including possessions, fame, success, or pleasure. All are transitory. We have become more keenly aware of this as we see on our tv’s and other devices the destruction caused by floods, wildfires, hurricanes and other disasters. We are often reminded how ephemeral all life is.

Yet these readings are not primarily about wealth and the accumulation of goods. Commitment to justice for all creation and sharing the gifts we have can help us keep focus on what is crucial in life. The primary and crucial question is where is God in our lives? Is God the center in all we think, say and do? We can so easily slip in other values, “vanities,” and behaviors. The readings this week remind us to frequently stop and ask ourselves, where is God in my life right now? How does this love relationship with God and my sisters and brothers change my life right now?

On another topic:

We recently received word that our sister and co-worker Mary Elizabeth Grimes, the President of Marian Middle School, has experienced gun violence in her family. Her daughter Danielle Whaley, who lives in Atlanta, was robbed at gunpoint. After the robber stole her money, he told her to drive away. He then shot through the rear window. The bullet went through the driver’s seat and lodged in her spinal cord. She is paralyzed from her waist down. She has been in the hospital over a month. Mary Elizabeth is the sole support of Danielle and her daughter. She had recently started her own business, Yummy Delights Kitchen, feeding the homeless as well as others. Please keep Ms. Grimes and her family in prayer during this very difficult time.

You can read more about their struggle and their faith on their Go Fund Me Page - https://www.gofundme.com/f/mary-elizabeth-grimes-and-danielle?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer