



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

March 21, 2021
Fifth Sunday in Lent

This Sunday's Scriptures (Revised Common Lectionary, RCL)

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-13; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33.

Silence

"There is silence of the tongue, there is a silence of the whole body, there is a silence of the soul, there is the silence of the mind, and there is the silence of the spirit."

- By John the Solitary, Desert Father

Most of us grew up participating in worship services which were well-ordered, consisting of people reading scripture, several music selections, group responses, and even in some churches now, there is video playing in the background. I do not argue that any of these approaches to worship are invalid or inappropriate. Not at all. Yet, except for the Society of Friends and Taizé services, I have not been to many worship services where there is planned silence. Silence which stops us from talking or listening to someone else talk. Silence which allows us to wait for God to talk.

The Desert Fathers and Mothers insisted on practicing silence, solitude, and stillness, which is good medicine for us today. I do not have to remind everyone about the demands of work, family, and just making ends meet, especially during the pandemic. It is disturbing to read so many emerging statistics about the decline of mental health in the US. Isolation from human contact and job insecurity are just two of the major stressors we face: I describe our situation as anything but normal and where we are going anything but the "way things used to be."

Now therefore, lead me

Wherever you please.

Lead me to salvation,

Teach me what is true,

And go before me

In the way of repentance.

(Mary of Egypt, 4th century Egyptian ascetic)

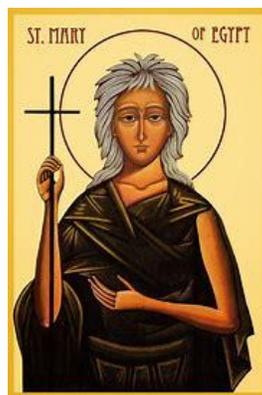
The lines above of Mary of Egypt cannot be understood or even make sense of if we do not steep ourselves in "the silence of spirit." So, my advice this week is to make space for silence and listen for God, through meditations and "listening to what God is saying to us."

Meditations for This Upcoming Week

Taken from our Scripture for this week, I invite you to reflect each day on one of these:

- Sunday: (Jeremiah) “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts...I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.”
- Monday: (Psalm 51) “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.”
- Tuesday: (Hebrews) “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.”
- Wednesday: (John) “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”
- Thursday: (Psalm 51) “For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly.”
- Friday: (Hebrews) “Jesus became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”
- Saturday: (John) “Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life....Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.”

May the Holy Spirit surround you this week. AMEN.



Special Prayers: for John and Devra continuing medical treatments; for those people who continue to suffer the aftereffects of the harsh winter; those suffering during the COVID pandemic; for the victims of violence and their families; and finally, for peace and justice within our country.