



Lent reflection for March 13, 2024

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Mark 8:11-26

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation.” And he left them, and getting into the boat again he went across to the other side.

Now the disciples had forgotten to bring any bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.” They said to one another, “It is because we have no bread.” And becoming aware of it, Jesus said to them, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and fail to see? Do you have ears and fail to hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?” They said to him, “Twelve.” “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?” And they said to him, “Seven.” Then he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Can you see anything?” And the man looked up and said, “I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.” Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and he looked intently, and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Then he sent him away to his home, saying, “Do not even go into the village.”

Today's Reflection is by Matthew Siegel

Today's passage from Mark, reminded me of a recent instance in which I noticed representations of Christ's teachings. It happened last week. My wife and I watched a Netflix show called "Jury Duty" over the week-long winter break from school. There seemed to be a novel premise in which a non-actor named Ronald was planted amongst a cast of actors who played out a civil court jury case. Thus, Ronald believed the court case was real, whereas all other people in the show were actors. It could appear that everyone was in on the joke save for Ronald. Except, the show was far less of a joke on Ronald and much more of a way of revealing his apparent good nature. At the end of the show, Ronald was referred to as a "hero" because he treated his colleagues in many compassionate, forgiving, and generous ways. Again, Ronald was not acting-out parts of a script. Rather, he helped his new-found friends because he seemed to be a good person.

In the finale, it was summed up that the show was, in fact, more than entertainment for the audience. It was almost like a study and showcase of a person who simply knew how to treat others well. It appears to me that Ronald was an example of someone who demonstrated many of the attributes that we think are pro-social and loving in the ways that Christ taught us. And, I think that Mark is telling us that believing in Christ, and the lessons in loving one another, requires belief in the face of not having complete proof of God. Thus, we are left to look out for signs of Jesus's teachings as they occur in everyday life. For me recently, it was watching Ronald take care of others in Jury Duty.

Although I believe in God more now than I have in earlier parts of my adult life, I still question my faith in a higher power often enough. Yet I find it far more relieving to watch out for moments of love between people. As a result of those observations, I believe that I can also view God's presence in the world.



Matthew Siegel lives in Windsor Terrace with his amazing wife, Cindy, and their beautiful, smart children, Penelope and Benjamin. Matt works as a psychologist in private practice. He enjoys cycling, snowboarding (and resuming skiing after decades of not skiing), and being in the outdoors.