

LENT 2017

<p>Revelation can happen anywhere. <i>Jesus taught us that when we give food to the hungry we are giving food to him.</i> <i>This is a moment of revelation.</i></p>	<p>Revelation can happen through your daily prayer. <i>When you are attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit, you may be touched, strengthened by a touch of divine revelation</i></p>	<p>Revelation can happen through the ups and downs of daily life. <i>Perhaps there is a homeless man who you try to avoid. You witness him helping an elderly gentleman who has slipped on the ice. Here is a moment of revelation.</i></p>	<p>Revelation can happen through your parish community. <i>Today, one of your fellow parishioners shared with you how they care for the feeble aunt. She takes a lot of effort. This is a moment of revelation of the goodness of God.</i></p>
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ALWAYS BE SURPRISED BY REVELATION

If you live too close to something you take it for granted and you will often miss seeing it. All your life the city's water system has worked well. You take it for granted that the water is safe and always available. Then comes one very cold week in January. The water lines on your street freeze up. The city department comes to run a water hose from your neighbor's place to your house.

Once again you have water to wash the dishes and flush to toilet. The twenty hours of inconvenience without water have taught your entire family to appreciate the city's water department.

When we grow up with religion we just take it for granted. We have always believed and, in fact, we are a pretty good believer. No questions asked. In fact, we are put out if we are challenged on our faith.

Taking our religion for granted is harmful to our growth as the followers of Jesus. It will only be through struggles, doubt and discovery that we will come to know what it means for God to break through into our lives.

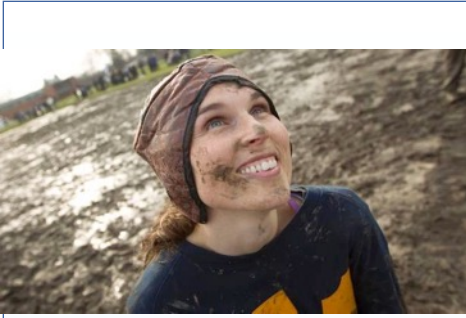
We humans are hungry for God. We long for revelation but it is always God who breaks through first. We cannot determine how and when God will come. It will always be a surprise that cannot be controlled by human beings.



Our religion starts out in the wilderness where Moses is raising sheep (he was a farmer trying to support his family). Unbeknownst to him, he sees a bush on fire. He approaches the burning bush! It is from that burning bush that God will send him to free the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. God will come at the most unexpected moments. There will be a burning bush in your life!



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Each Sunday the reader will proclaim the Word of God. This is not just someone giving a very good reading from the Bible. This is meant to be a moment of revelation. God is speaking to us through the Word being proclaimed. There is a much deeper mystery happening within our faith community. The people of the Church are meant to receive and chew over the Word of God. How does this apply to us? How is God speaking to us in this time and space? Are we being challenged to see the Holy Spirit moving among us in a new way? The reader makes tangible God's revelation to this community. This is a time of encounter with our God.

It is so easy to be lulled to sleep in our church pews. We make a mistake to think that this is all old stuff. The process of revelation is that it is always new.

The center of our faith is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There was an actually historical moment when Jesus died and was raised by God the Father. It is never sufficient to think of it in terms of historical. It actually happened.

The other part of the resurrection is that it must now happen in the life and faith of each believer. Now, each believer must experience the resurrection within their own lives. Each parish church must be a community where the risen Lord is alive and moving among them.

Simply put: revelation must be an event without our own space and time.

As we begin this first Sunday of Lent take a step back. Look around your own faith life. Are you living knowing that the Son of God has been given to us, but that we must continue to discover the new revelation of Jesus Christ in our here and now.

Stand up and walk over to your kitchen sink. Touch the handles of

the facet. How often do you just take good, clean water for granted?

Now, walk over to the cross of Jesus. Touch it. How often do you take for granted the love and revelation that God has poured out into your lives? How often do you miss the Holy Spirit living and moving among you? How often do you miss revelation?

Lent is a gift. It is a call to slow down and be attentive to the movements of the Holy Spirit. Instead of thinking that we have to add one more prayer time to our daily schedule we need to slow down and be attentive to the Holy Spirit, present within our daily prayer.

As you pick up the Bible to pray over the Word, do not try to read too much. Give attention to the individual words or phrases. Reading the Scriptures during this Lent is meant to be a time to savor the Word. Chew it over well. Allow the full flavour of revelation to sink into your life.



LENT 2017



Speak, Lord, your servant is listening

There is a code word in the Bible that expresses our willingness to hear and act on the Word of God. Whenever God broke into the lives of the prophets they responded with “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”

This is shorthand to express cooperation with God. The revelation of God has been made known and we have chosen to accept.

This first Sunday of Lent is an excellent time to recognize where God is being shared and revealed among us. To each of these events we want to respond with “Speak, Lord..”

God comes to you through the teaching of your parents and the

church in which you were raised. Your parents were ordinary people who tried to follow God in all things. Often times they did not speak directly about God but their actions spoke loud and clear. Recall when you Father picked up your neighbor who had fallen, drove the elderly gentleman to the emergency and spent five hours with him through all the tests and examination.

Your Father was a busy man. The goodness that flowed from his heart came from the Holy Spirit. God was moving him and he responded to help the man in crisis. This was a very ordinary moment of revelation but God was very much at work in the concern and hands of your Father.

Your father did not speak the words (or even was even aware of

them) but his action spoke of cooperation and response to the movements of God’s goodness.

Then in your parish community there is a man who comes all by himself. As you are getting to know him you hear that he is trying to follow the teachings of Jesus is all things. He appears so humble and very aware of his own failings. But in his quiet approach to life there is a shaft of light that shines through. He brings his entire life to the service of Christ.

In his very quiet way he is serving Christ. The moment of revelation is coming through his lifestyle.

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening ...

There are moments when I feel almost overwhelmed by the evil of war and people fleeing for their lives. Speak courage to my flagging spirit.

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening

When I journey with friends and co-workers who are struggling with their cancers and diabetes. Give me the strength to be present as they work through this illness.

You can only hear God if

- Your mouth is shut and your ears are listening
You listen first for the person of God and then only after that you listen for the words
You know that God wants to be with you and share God’s goodness with you today

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May the doors of revelation be open to you when...

..you search for God in your daily prayer

.. you look for depth when you study and prayer the Scriptures .. you care for the poor, the forgotten and the abandoned.

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ that makes the Church

When you live in a culture that is so very powerful you lose touch with your human limitations. We can conquer almost every disease, change space stations above the earth and make smaller and more powerful computers. We can think we are actually in the driver's seat of life.

When we reflect on the meaning of God's revelation we are confronted with the reality that God is in charge. We are only fellow travelers through this journey of life. We do not control everything. In the split second's time we could be no more than a pile of white dust!

But God's revelation is very real. It is powerful and it works. It keeps us very humble.

God comes to underline that we are deeply wanted and of

inestimable value. No human being is excluded or under valued. The cross of Jesus spells out how far that God will go for each one of us. Each one means the good, the mediocre and the downright evil human beings. God wants all.

God's revelation is directed towards bringing the fullness of creation to its height. This means that God shares gods-self to bring all human beings to respect, care for and value one another. It means not only an end to all wars but that all human beings pickup the garden hoes and grow food for one another.

Walk into Lent looking for the many ways that God reveals God's love, mercy, goodness and compassion to you. Keep your eyes open this Lent.

PRAYER FOR FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

God's revelation is in front of us. We have only to be attentive with eyes, ears and an open heart to receive his revelation.

Lord, I ask for the attitude of Moses. You surprised him in the burning bush. He listened. He responded with his life and courage.

"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Lord, you came unexpectedly to the unknown young woman named Mary. You asked her to be mother. She heard. She trusted and she believed. May I do likewise.

"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."