

February 2010

***Lectio Divina* with St. Paul: The Letter to the Ephesians**

I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph 3, 18)

Paul's First Letter to the Ephesians

The letter to the Ephesians sums up God's great plan of salvation, hidden from the beginning of the world, and now revealed in Christ. The unfolding of God's plan in Christ creates a messianic people of God, joining together Jew and Gentile, removing social barriers that have kept people apart. As God's messenger and servant of the Gospel, Paul is aware of his call to reveal the mystery of God's love. He calls the Christian community to live the consequences of their new identity in Christ which demands renewal of life, unity within the body of Christ, and a sharing of the gifts which each one has received.

After the example of the Lord who taught us to pray, and of their founder, each day the members of the Company set aside a suitable time for free, selfless, and loving contact with God. Each day throughout the year they will make at least one half-hour of meditation (RM 28).

Montfortian Today, 117

Montfort at Pontchâteau

Just as Paul was convinced that it was not only his efforts, but the power of God, at work in his ministry, there was more at work in Pontchâteau than Fr. de Montfort's efforts. The grace of God was at work in him and in the people who came to work on the Calvary. This work of grace was more significant than the physical construction of the Calvary. The power of God's grace continued to be effective even in light of the "failure" of the project. The Calvary could be dismantled, but there was no undoing the grace of God at work within the people.

According to Montfort's apostolic inspiration, the proclamation of the Gospel by the missionaries must:

- a. discover its prophetic dynamism from the action of the Holy Spirit;
- b. be a summons to "renewal" (cf. RM 56) reinforced by their own example of "living in the manner of the apostles" (cf. RM 2);
- c. express itself:
 - by a preference for the deprived, the oppressed, and the exploited (cf. RM 7),
 - by attention to "the needs of the Church" (L 5) which indicate urgent apostolic necessities;
- d. be based upon:
 - a complete dependence on Providence, which expresses itself in a particular way in a missionary life lived in dependence on the people to whom they are sent (cf. RM 50),
 - a fervent imitation of Mary, and an availability and openness toward her;
- e. commit itself to the proclamation of salvation through the cross, which is the summit of wisdom and the power of God (1 Cor 2:1-3), the unsurpassed sign of love and of total gift;
- f. manifest a love that is passionate for the glory of God, the ultimate goal of all ministry.

Montfortian Today, 51

Suggested Passages for Daily Lectio Divina

Eph 1, 1-6	Eph 2, 11-13	Eph 4, 1-6	Eph 5, 6-10
Eph 1, 7-10	Eph 2, 14-18	Eph 4, 7-10	Eph 5, 11-14
Eph 1, 11-14	Eph 2, 19-22	Eph 4, 11-13	Eph 5, 15-20
Eph 1, 15-19	Eph 3, 1-7	Eph 4, 14-16	Eph 5, 21-27
Eph 1, 20-23	Eph 3, 8-12	Eph 4, 17-24	Eph 5, 28-33
Eph 2, 1-5	Eph 3, 13-16	Eph 4, 25-32	Eph 6, 1-9
Eph 2, 6-10	Eph 3, 17-21	Eph 5, 1-5	Eph 6, 10-24

Some Suggested Questions for Reflection

The message Paul proclaims is a positive one. Those who were far away, like the gentile Ephesians, have been brought near to God. They have passed from death to life in Christ Jesus. In what ways have you seen the positive message of the gospel having an impact on the people you serve? How has the gospel transformed them?

Paul calls himself a "servant of the gospel" (Eph 3, 7). In what ways do you live as a servant of the gospel? How does the gospel direct your path and guide the way you act?

Paul is convinced that the power of God at work within us can accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine. In what ways has this power of God been at work in you? With this power of God, how have you been able to do more than you imagined you could do?

Paul calls the Ephesians to change their behavior in light of their baptismal identity: "Sleeper, awake! Arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." What are we being called to "wake up to" as a local community? ... as a Congregation?