

2 Sunday B

January 17, 2021

St. Patrick

In the last of the four Gospels written, St. John's Gospel, it's the first words of Jesus in that Gospel, addressed to two persons wondering about him.

“What are you looking for?”—so Jesus asked them...and, he asks *each* of us this Sunday. **“What are *you* looking for?”** Then, Jesus says, **“Come and see.”**

Those first two stayed with Jesus, and they found that what their hearts were really looking for in life, and what God had in store for them—well, the two meshed together in being with Jesus.

Oh, the lowly peanut. We all know how George Washington Carver is famous for the peanut, and how he produced hundreds of products from the peanut—including shampoo and ink. Born a slave, he became the most prominent African-American scientist of the early 20th century.

One day an author asked George Washington Carver the secret behind his amazing achievements. Mr. Carver answered that he woke up each morning at 4 o'clock. Then he said, “I go out into the woods. There in the early morning stillness, I listen to God and to his plan for me” (1).

Like those first two disciples in St. John's Gospel, George Washington Carver *stayed* with Jesus. In that closeness with Jesus, Mr. Carver found that God's plan for him, and his own deepest longings, meshed into a very faithful discipleship.

“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

This weekend our nation remembers the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His courage and witness are so needed at this time of crises in our nation. The pivotal moment in Dr. King's spiritual life happened when he was twenty-eight years old. Oh, you've heard the story. Late at night, an anonymous man called Dr. King on the phone and told him, using sneering slurs of racism, that he was going to bomb his home. His wife and newborn infant were both sleeping.

That night was his breaking point. Too late to telephone his father, Dr. King was alone. He had a doctorate in theology. He was a preacher in a church. He was a man of talent and leadership. However, up to that time, God was all in the abstract—way out there, and not really in his heart. Sitting at his kitchen table at

midnight, for the first time Dr. King truly turned his life over to God. As he later put it, “Almost out of nowhere I heard a voice. ‘Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo, I will be with you, even until the end of the world’” (2).

That night, Dr. King chose to *stay* with Jesus. He just didn’t *think* about Jesus in his head. No, *in his heart* Martin Luther King, Jr. experienced that what he was looking for, and what Jesus was calling him to be, well...they fit together closely. Dr. King later wrote about that peace with Jesus in that crucible of a night, “I was ready to face anything.”

“**Come and see,**” Jesus invites us. And, you know, how he’ll speak with us deeply within won’t be how he did so with George Washington Carver or Martin Luther King, Jr.—the first, in the stillness of the dawning morning; the other, at midnight as he sat at the kitchen table. It’s unique and special for each of us.

“**What are you looking for?**” In truly staying with Jesus, we’ll find that what our heart is really looking for, and what Jesus wants of us—they come together and mesh neatly.

Then, we can be ready to face anything.

(1) Mark Link, S.J., *Vision 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way* (Allen, Texas: Tabor Publishing, 1991), pg. 63.

(2) As recounted by Robert Ellsberg, *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), pg. 152.

General Intercessions

January 17, 2021

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lead us, your church, to listen to you deeply within our hearts, and then follow your Son faithfully; we pray to you, O Lord—

Inspire President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, together with the new Congress, that in this time of grave crises they may lead us with integrity, courage, and wisdom; we pray to you, O Lord—

Strengthen our nation as we remember this weekend the witness of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that we might work together to end racism and bigotry in all their forms; we pray to you, O Lord—

During this coming Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, heal the divisions among varied faith communions, that we might “be one,” as Jesus prayed; we pray to you, O Lord—

Console the sick, especially those with Covid-19; be with those suffering from the cold, and empower those held back by injustice; we pray to you, O Lord—

Raise to new life those who have died, especially Harvey Gamble, and all who have perished from the coronavirus; we pray to you, O Lord-