

21 Sunday C

August 21, 2022

St. Patrick

The last line of Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel: **"Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some who are first will be last."** Let's face it, St. Patrick's, we've heard that line so often it just goes over our head.

There are some surprises about who, in fact, will make it in the kingdom of God. This insight comes very close to the truth found in Aesop's famous fable about "The Tortoise and the Hare."

"Who's going to win?"—The reader might ask, obviously expecting the hare over the turtle. Aesop cleverly replies, **"Not the one who thinks the race is won."**

What if I—you—what if we think we're among the first, but we're going to end up being last? You remember last May's Kentucky Derby? The horse "Rich Strike" wasn't even going to run into the race up until the day before when another horse got scratched due to an injury. "Rich Strike" was an 80-1 long shot. At the start of the race, he ran far behind. Amazingly, in the homestretch, "Rich Strike" zigged zagged from among the horses and pulled off one of the biggest shocks in Derby history!

"Who's going to win?" And Aesop agitates, "Not the one who thinks the race is won."

Jesus says to us in the Gospel, **"I do not know where you come from."** C'mon, Jesus, you *gotta* know us. We've been at this a long time. Sure, we've had our Sunday sabbaticals here and there, but you've got to know us. And, then, *you* welcome all that riffraff from the east and west, from north and south...folks who are not even part of the deal. Hey, Jesus, it doesn't seem to matter where *they* are from! (1)

Friends: We forgot what Jesus said at the beginning of today's Gospel. St. Luke, the Gospel writer, reminds us, **"Jesus...was teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem."** He said it last Sunday, too. Yes, for ten chapters in St. Luke's Gospel, he's making his journey, running the race, with Calvary laying ahead of him. He's focused on where he's headed, Friends.

It's not enough to hang out with Jesus, but really stay on the sidelines as bystanders. Sure, he brings in the most unlikely folks to join him on the race. St. Patrick's, whether we fall back of the line or, like "Rich Strike," surge to the front, well—as disciples we've got to *stay* with Jesus to the very end of the race.

Then, we'll strike it rich by Kingdom standards!

(1) I am indebted here to Edward P. Hahnenberg, "This Way to Jerusalem" in *Give Us This Day—August 2022* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022) pp. 226-27.

General Intercessions

August 21, 2022

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Make us faithful in following Jesus in his way to Jerusalem and his cross; we pray to you, O Lord—

Break down the divisions and bitterness within our church, nation and world—and give us true healing; we pray to you, O Lord—

Give us patience and a love shown daily, making us the hands and feet of Christ in our families, community and world; we pray to you, O Lord—

Unite politicians, scientists and economists in efforts to restore health and wholeness to the earth's lands and waters; we pray to you, O Lord—

Renew and energize those who are sick, those who are neglected, and those suffering people of Eastern Kentucky in the aftermath of flooding; we pray to you, O Lord—

Console those who grieve, and give eternal life to those who have died, especially Courtney McDonald and (*for the 11:00 a.m. Mass only--*) for Floyd Lynch, at this first anniversary of his death (*and for the 5:15 p.m. Mass only--*) and for Allan Stiles, at this first anniversary of his death; we pray to you, O Lord—

