

Lent Day 9
Friday February 19, 2016

Reading: Mark 5:14-20

Reflection

I remember, at age 21, when I gave my life to Christ, the reaction of the various people in my life. My Dad and his wife happily led me in prayer to confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour. My Mom burst into happy tears. My friends were suspicious that I had a new motive to judge and convert them. People in the neighbourhood wondered how it could have happened to me; a mix of interest and oddity. I just felt like I was floating — the whole world was new and wonderful!

The picture is quite similar to this passage. People wondered at the change in this young man, but they were also concerned about the damage to their livelihood as pig herders. The people want Jesus to leave and the young man wants to enter into discipleship. His discipleship looks different than going with Jesus, but he is enlisted into ministry and the locals are amazed by what they see and hear.

When we encounter Christ, or encountered by him, the gamut of reactions don't just happen outside of us, they happen inside of us as well. Henri Nouwen reminds us that it is a difficult thing to be healed. It's not easy and it's not painless. To choose Christ is to give up everything else. So, during this time of Lent when we are asking the Spirit to examine us in deep ways so we can shed our sin and earnestly repent, it isn't easy or pleasant.

Part of us will be eager and happy. Part of us will want to go on and go deeper. But, part of us will want Jesus to leave. We will want to protect ourselves from being divested of ourselves. And, part of ourselves will just wonder at the encounter. It is important to be open to the range of reactions, but more important to consciously give ourselves up to the power of Jesus to heal and transform. Not necessarily an easy task.

Prayer

Our Lord and Healer, encounter us and remake us in your image. Divest us of our false selves, so we might be made new in you. Discover in us and to us our true selves. Amen.