

August 7, 2022 – Waking Up to Faith (19th Sunday in Ordinary Time)
Gospel of Luke 12:32-48
Fr. John

'Be dressed and ready for action and have your lamps lit...'

Like many people, when I get bogged down with too much routine, my eyes and mind begin to glaze over and I go about life as though I were half asleep.

Yes, routine **is important** in terms of getting certain daily tasks done quickly and efficiently - [otherwise a simple job like tying up our shoelaces would be a skill that we would have to relearn over and over again].

But the danger is that oft-repeated experiences that become almost automatic may get us lulled into a state of unconsciousness akin to sleep walking.

Our gospel reading today warns us about losing that sense of awareness which keeps us sharp in our appreciation of life and our consciousness of God's presence in even the most mundane and routine matters. Conversion is not so much a matter of giving assent to a set of doctrines but rather waking up to the reality that already exists.

Waking up is usually unpleasant. We are nice and comfortable in bed and it's irritating to be woken up.

Being roused out of our sleep however is akin to viewing things as if we were seeing them for the very first time through the eyes and mind of a small child. Someone once stated that faith is like looking at familiar things long enough so that they become unfamiliar. Poets and mystics seem to have that ability - but that doesn't exclude the rest of us from waking up to the God who disguises Himself as our life.

Waking up to faith is waking up to 'the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen' [as the author of the letter to the Hebrews puts it.] And that is true or it wouldn't be ...faith.

And faith has that component of anticipation with the joy and delight that comes along with that. Unfortunately, as Pope Francis noted in his first apostolic exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel, many Christians look more like they were just returning from a funeral. Maybe that statement alone, coming from a pope, woke a few people up.

When Jesus spoke about the return of the Son of Man [read - the Messiah], we often think of that happening eons in the future in some cataclysmic event. And we take the attitude: 'Wake me when it comes'!

We might be anticipating him in the front door while he's coming in the back. Abraham and Sarah, in a sense stood waiting at the door for God to provide them with a child and when it seemed all hope of that was gone. Along came Isaac and through him descendants 'as many as the stars of heaven and as innumerable grains of sand on the seashore.' In fact, Abraham and Sarah are honoured in the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam religions that are often grouped under the term 'ABRAMIC'.

Awareness of the ever-present presence of God is almost like ground zero for faith. It's the type of faith that Francis of Assisi reawakened in the Church when it was becoming too theological and intellectual.

These days, when our attention is being drawn more and more to our environmental issues on planet earth, it just might be the wake-up call that we need. 'Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge ...at the proper time?'

We heed Jesus' words at the end of today's gospel reading: 'From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required, and from the one to whom much has been entrusted even more will be demanded.'

Have we been awakened to what has been entrusted to us?