



Thursday

Jesus said to his disciples: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

The photo above was taken during the pandemic when the doors to the retreat house were closed for a time, but the doors between the Eucharistic Chapel and the Fireplace Room were kept open. What you see, is a lovely open space, inviting you to enter in the Holy Ground within, where prayer, and Eucharist take place.

Suggestions for Prayer:

As you read today's scripture with Jesus' promise that you will receive if you ask, find if you seek and find an open door if you know, what feelings arise in you? Do you trust these words of Jesus? Has your lived experience been that when you have asked for, you have received etc.? Who hasn't prayed and begged for God to intervene in the present war in Ukraine, in Gaza, in Sudan? When we witness the cruelty of leaders who will do anything to amass wealth and power, how effective do we think our prayers for justice and mercy are? When there is no apparent answer to your pleas, is there another way of trusting that God is at work in the world?

Speak to Jesus as one friend speaks to another. What does he have to say to you about your own disappointments

when you feel that you have not received, found or felt the door closed on you? Does he have any encouraging words for you?

Friday

More than sentinels wait for the dawn!



“Waiting for the dawn” is one of the most common experiences for retreatants. Even, “night owls” will make the effort to “wait for the dawn” if it’s not too early!

If you have photographs you have taken of dawn at Eastern point, is today an invitation to look at them again and remember the beauty and the serenity?

On another note, you may have seen the film “Wicked” which was nominated for an Oscar this year. If you know the story of “Wicked,” the Broadway musical, one of the reasons for the Wicked Witch of the West’s wickedness is that she was different. She has green skin, setting her apart from others and making her an object of ridicule. As the story unfolds, you see the goodness within, and that people are not “intrinsically” evil but more often it’s the lack of love and life’s circumstances that are to blame.

The word “wicked” pervades the Ezekiel reading today. In a way, Ezekiel is “breaking ground” in suggesting that a person can’t be pegged as “wicked” or “good.” It’s not the person in and of themselves but rather how the person chooses to do good or evil. It’s so easy to call someone “wicked” in a way that defines his or her nature, although with the evidence of evil and cruelty in our world today, it’s very tempting to call out someone in power as “wicked.”

Here's a poem inspired by the Ezekiel reading. “Wicked Good” is a common expression in certain parts of Massachusetts, meaning “really good!”

Wicked Good!
Wicked which?
Wicked evil, yes
Wicked good, no
One cannot be both/and
Or can one be two at once?
Wicked comes from wicca,
Witch or wizard.
Wicca which?
One who casts spells
And instills fears?
Or one who casts cares
To the west wind
Knowing nature heals,
Herbs powers
Nature's wizardry
Drying herbs releasing
Healing remedies.

Ezekiel assays,
Good as gold or
Wicked as a western witch?
Which is which?
Do not be so wick to judge,

Ezekiel essays to say,
“One’s wick can absorb both
Good and evil
What makes the difference
Is what one does
Not ‘who one is.”
Will your wick work
For good and not for evil,
Burning brightly,
God’s glow, sheen
And shine, waxing
And not waning?

Jesus, the wizard of us
Cast out demons and nets
Freeing some, catching others
Jesus, the wizard of us
Knew how to cast spells
Knowing nature’s healing
A single word enough to hear
And be healed,
God was this wizard’s
Source, sirree,
He sees the good as gold

In each and every,
which way, he knows us
for what we are,
a patchwork of guilt and grace
a wick's work of guile and good
The wizard of Us knows we are
Wicked Good!

RVE

Suggestions for prayer:

As you reflect on today's scriptures and the images and wordplay in today's poem, what is stirred up in you? Can you accept that you are a "patchwork of guilt and grace, a wick's work of guile and good?" In the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, we are invited to know that we are sinners who are unconditionally loved. How does God let you know that this is the way you are known and loved?