

April 7, 2019
Fifth Sunday In Lent
Eliminating Distractions : Trolls and Hypocrites

Ancient Reading ~ John 12:1-8

Six days before Passover Jesus went back to Bethany, where he had raised Lazarus from the dead. There they gave a banquet in Jesus' honor. Martha was doing the serving, and Lazarus himself was there. Mary brought a pound of costly ointment, pure spikenard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair. The house was full of the scent of the ointment. Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples- the one who would betray Jesus -protested, "Why wasn't this ointment sold? It could have brought three hundred silver pieces- nearly a year's wages! -and the money given to the poor!" Judas didn't say this because he was concerned for the poor. He said this because he was in charge of the common fund and sometimes would steal from it.

So Jesus replied, "Leave her alone! She has kept this perfume in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor with you, but you won't always have me."

Second Reading ~ "Salvation From the False Self", adapted from Father Richard Rohr in Things Hidden, Scripture as Spirituality

We all identify with our idealized self so strongly when we are young that we become experts at denial, and we learn to eliminate or deny anything that doesn't support that view of our self. Neither our idealized self nor our shadow is evil in itself; they just allow us to do evil and not know it. Our shadow self makes us all into hypocrites on some level. Remember, hypocrite comes from the Greek word for "actor," someone playing a role rather than being "real." We are all in one kind of a closet or another, and are even encouraged by society to play our roles. Until grace is fully triumphant, we are all hypocrites of sorts.

Usually everybody else can see your shadow, so it is crucial that you learn what everybody else already knows about you. The moment you become whole and holy is when you can accept your shadow self, or, to put it in moral language, when you can admit your sin. Basically, you move from unconsciousness to consciousness by a deliberate struggle with your shadow self. There needs to be a struggle, it seems, and usually many of them.

The saint is one who has no "I" to protect or project. His or her "I" is in conscious union with the "I AM" of God, and that is more than enough. Divine union overrides any need for self-hatred or self-promotion. Such people do not need to be perfectly right, and they know they cannot be anyway, so they just try to be in right relationship. In other words, they try above all else to be loving.

Love holds you tightly and safely and always. It gives you the freedom to meet the enemy and know the major enemy is "me," as the old as the old saying goes. But you do not hate "me" either; you just see through and beyond "me." Shadow work literally saves you from yourself (your False Self, that is), which is the foundational meaning of salvation.