

Fifth Sunday of the Season of Creation

October 1, 2023

Sister Jan Ginzkey, OSB shares a reflection on the scripture readings:
Ezekiel 18:25 – 28; Psalm 25:4-9; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28 – 32

Ezekiel repeats Isaiah's message from last Sunday. God's ways are not our human ways. God is more merciful and forgiving. God is waiting for us to acknowledge our choices that might have caused hurt, harm or hostility toward ourselves, or others. It is never too late to respond to God's call. To humbly receive God's forgiveness.

Psalm 25 petitions God to teach us God's paths, the way of loving compassion. St. Paul prays that the Philippians imitate Christ's compassion and love.

The Gospel parable continues the theme that our choices matter. Conversion requires growing in awareness of the choices we have made that lead us away from God's paths. We can make different choices that reflect God's abundant generosity, compassion, and forgiveness.

In the Gospel parable the first child refuses to go into the field to work as the father has asked. Later this child chooses to act and obey the parent's wishes. The second child learned the right thing to say, but what matters is what is actually done. The second child's choice was to lie and disobey the parent's request.

This is the last Sunday of the Season of Creation. What choices have we made? The media is filled with evidence of climate change, historic floods, record heat levels, severe hurricanes, earthquakes, melting glaciers and the disappearance of multiple species and biodiversity. How can we be more attentive to the cries of the earth? How can we turn our consciousness into effective actions to limit the devastation and heal the earth?

What are our choices about how we are responding to God's call to integral ecological conversion? We can't do everything. We can do something. Any action and choice can make a difference. How can we grow in a spirituality

that will help us better to acknowledge, reverence, care for, and share the gifts of creation? We can choose to live the Gospel values.

Each person has choices they can make. One may decide to change what and how they spend money. This may reduce the textile and solid waste they create. This may be a way to support fair trade or speak out against child labor and hazardous working conditions.

Another may choose to learn more about how we each contribute to the inequality and unjust systems. How am I complicit with the institutions that perpetuate racism and poverty in our country?

Some may become active in welcoming immigrants and refugees seeking asylum. Pope Francis advocates that immigrants and refugees be treated by all countries as beloved children of God. They are our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

The 2023 Liturgical Season of Creation is ending. However, we can choose to begin or continue the actions we have taken as an individual or family. We can choose to strengthen our habit of recycling, reusing and repurposing items. We can choose to support the nonprofit agencies that are working with the poor, the marginalized, or ignored. We can each do something!