

TRINITY NEWS

Lateral Reflections on the Stranger from Galilee


I have been reflecting on the New Testament for over forty years and it is an abiding passion. I am entranced by the figure who walks through its pages. He has affected the turning pages of history with his matchless teaching, his luminous presence and hauntingly strange way that he looks at life. When the scholars wipe the strangeness from his face, it returns. He bears the marks of the numinous, the indefinable and yet unmistakable presence of God manifested on earth. We get glimpses of this in the saints. You have met a quite number of saints but you may have not recognized them. The saints will tell jokes, enjoy life to the full, and they will think most clearly when they are at their happiest. Something seeps through their being that makes us want to bow down like Malcolm Muggeridge, a tough-minded intellectual, did when he met Mother Teresa.

Innate holiness cannot be fully designated or fully explained. When I listen to the radio preachers and the preachers on television, I often think that they don't have the slightest clue about who Jesus really was in his own person. They dress him up in a western suit and it doesn't fit. He was middle-eastern. He seems to have looked at the world from an upside-down point of view. Jesus said that we cannot be truly human unless we are truly grounded in God. He talked about the Reign of God as if it were the most real thing on earth. He spoke to people as if they were unique beings. He healed those who came across his path, while others languished only a shadow away. He has affected Christians in a way that other great figures in their religions have not affected their followers. They love and respect their leaders and they have found a great deal from them that sustains their lives. Only Christianity claims that this fragile, vulnerable, intensely positive person was not only human but also anchored in God like no other. He affects us from the moment that we decide he is the key person in our life. It is like loving someone. If they become an optional extra in our lives, we are no longer in love with them. It is all or nothing, and those who try to have it otherwise find despair.

I suspect that this effect that Jesus has on us has not always filtered through for those who think they can define him and punish those who don't follow their definitions. Jesus evokes either complete passion or utter indifference. There is no possibility of being a lukewarm Christian. It is not a half way religion. Neither is any religion worthy of its salt. But there are those who define him and constrain him in words and those who have no words to convince us. If Christ was brought to the table and confronted with the problems that we've had in our church, then he would probably have an opinion that would shake most of the proponents of various conflicting ideas.

Driven by compassion, and not by rules, he refused to condemn people for being themselves if it brought no harm to others. But he did condemn improper actions, especially false piety. The Stranger from Galilee has had an enormous effect on Christianity and indeed, he is the key to it all. We mangle his name with abstract truth and we draw different conclusions. Truth about meaning goes with living and walking in the way of Christ for us.

Bishop Arthur Jones

 **NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Wisdom 12:13,16-19; Psalm 86; Romans 8:18-25; Matthew 13:24-30,36-43



year old and 9-12 year old Classes. Interested applicants kindly leave their contact information at the Parish Office with Claire or Maricel.

Sunday School is again looking for teacher volunteers for the 6-8

THIS WEEK:

Tuesday, July 12.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Bible Study @ the Tutton's, 7:15pm (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village, Makati)

Thursday, July 14.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel