

November 5, 2023



Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

LIVING THE WORD!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Second Reading and Gospel

With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us. ... And for this reason, we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:8, 13

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. ... The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but

Reflection

Today's Second Reading from St. Paul to the Thessalonians speaks to our hearts if we allow ourselves to sit quietly with these words: "in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe." God's actively at work in us each time we hear and reflect on Scripture. I'm taken by the words "at work in you" because it reveals God's in-breaking presence in our lives. It is where we can respond to the promptings of the Spirit as we gently take in the Word of God. It is a call to each of us to open ourselves to God's continued influence and guidance in our lives.

In Matthew's Gospel, we are once again cautioned about saying one thing (that flows from our faith) and acting in ways that are contrary to who we say we are as followers of Jesus. Recalling the message from St. Paul in today's Second Reading, if we are truly taking in God's Word and allowing it to shape and mold our lives, then we can avoid the pitfalls of what Matthew is saying to us in today's Gospel.

In our humanness, and in the pressures we find in our society today to succeed and get ahead, we can fall into the trap of self-promotion at the expense of living the Gospel message in the ordinariness of our lives. The Word of God is and can be "new" each time we break open Scripture. It's God's mystery and grace at work in each of us that enables our hearts, minds, imagination, and creativity to spring forth each day, enabling our encounters with others to be sources of inspiration and moments where the sacred between us is revealed.

Word of Life

O Word of God, Source of all Wisdom and Love, guide my steps as this day unfolds. May the imprint of my words fall gently upon those whom I encounter and may my footsteps reveal my desire to follow you more closely.

May the seeds of inspiration found within your Word be new streams of life within me, where the metaphorical sharp-edged rocks within me will be smoothed and refreshed by your Spirit.

Word of Life broken open for all of creation, let us embrace the goodness within and around us, spreading the Good News through our presence, thoughts, words, and actions.



Sidney, OH
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

Reflect on how open you are in allowing the Word of God to fall afresh within you. Are you open to being influenced by God's gentle, and sometimes not so gentle, nudges in your life?

Perhaps using the ancient tradition of Lectio Divinia will ignite your imagination. Break open the Word found in today's readings and focus on the one or two phrases that capture your attention. What excites you? What disturbs you? What leaves you hungering for more?

For Prayer

*We pray for all who desire to find meaning in their lives,
that they may encounter God in Scripture,
and perhaps in our presence.
May their hearts be open and receptive
to the Spirit's wisdom and guidance
because God's invitation never ends.
Amen.*

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