



Fr. Matt's Musings

July 28, 2017

Separation

Several years ago, a colleague at Bishop Ireton shared some articles with me. She is Jewish and became very fond of Salesian spirituality. One side effect of hearing about the gentleman saint and his writings was for her to delve more deeply into her Jewish tradition. The articles she shared with me were on Jewish spirituality. One of the articles explained the importance of certain words to the Jewish people. One of those holy words is separation.

Generally, I think of separation as a negative word. I think of loved ones being separated from each other. But this article explained another aspect of separation. In the story of creation, God begins by separating: light from darkness, heavens from the earth, dry land from the waters, etc. God separates Sunday from the rest of the work week as a day of rest. Israel is separated from the rest of the nations as a people peculiarly God's own, the chosen people. Also, God is separate. God is close, immanent, but God's holiness, goodness, omnipotence and omniscience separate God from all creation.

After reading the article, I began to think of other words that could be given a second, and new, fresh look. Doubts, questioning, confusion often are not moments of a lack of faith but a transition into a deeper faith and trust in God. The Scriptures tell us that suffering is not a punishment but a participation in Christ's own sufferings. Even sin and failure can be moments of humility and trust in the great mercy and forgiveness of our God. (Obviously, we try to avoid sin whenever possible!)

It is true that some separations can be painful and difficult. But, thanks to the Jewish tradition, we can also celebrate the holiness of the word. Let us try to do the same with doubt, suffering, sin and others that need a fresh look.

Live Jesus!

Fr. Matt

frhillyard@olgcv.org
www.olgcv.org

Vienna, VA 22182

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