

Even When We Grumble

I would imagine there have been times in your life when you wanted to scream. If you're a parent, how many times did you (or do you still) hear Mom, Mom, Mom, Mommy, Ma, Ma, Ma, Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad, Daddy, Dad... We'd do this to my own poor mother who would try to ignore it. However, when she couldn't take it anymore, she'd grit her teeth and bark "What?" I may or may not have confessed that I had been guilty of the same response when teaching as I'd get "Mr. Nesbit, Mr. Nesbit, Mister, Mister, Mister," or "Brother Paul, Brother Paul, Brother Paul, Brother, Brother, Bro." If they didn't get the "What?" through gritted teeth, they would get "I have changed my name and I am not telling you what it is."

It didn't matter what I said; they'd leave me alone for about a minute and a half, make up their own name for me, and start in again. Invariably, the new name that they made for me would make me laugh and I'd go back to my jovial self. I guess the other work would just have to wait. Besides, who has time for grumbling?

Sometimes, it is tough to be the person in charge or the person with all the answers. If you have the answers, you also get all the questions. It is so bad that, when you finally get home, you have to put a moratorium on questions for a bit. If you have to answer any more questions you feel as though your head may explode! Other times, though, you have to take a deep breath, gird your loins, or buck up and just do it.

There is a lot of grumbling and complaining going on these days. Have you noticed? There is even grumbling and complaining going on in our readings today as well as last week. “Moses, we want water.” “Moses, we want food.” “Moses? Why did you bring us out here to die?” Can’t you just here them? “Moses, Moses, Moses...” Or how about in the Gospel reading, “By what authority are you doing this?” “Master, what about...” Master, what is the greatest commandment?” “Master, what do I need for eternal life?” “Teacher, why do you eat with sinners? Master, Master, Teacher, Teacher, Jesus, Jesus... The really cool thing is that God does not grit His/Her teeth and say “WHAT?”

Instead, God offers food and drink to the Hebrew people, even when they grumble. Jesus offers *some* answers, even when Pharisees and Sadducees try to trick him into saying something wrong. He tells them that the ones considered to be the sinners will be the ones who have changed their ways and will be welcomed into the kingdom of God. What does God do for us today when we hunger and thirst for the truth? We are given bread from the earth and drink from the vine. We are allowed to come together on World Communion Sunday and remember that Jesus told us, “Whenever you do it, do it in remembrance of me.”

(For Westfield only...) We hear the stories of how our spiritual ancestors built this church and what they had to do 342 years ago to make it happen. So, maybe Rev. Taylor was a little slow to get it officially started but look at all the things that have happened since. Over the next few weeks, we will hear about things that we have done and things that we have to do. We cannot do it alone. It takes physical energy, financial energy, and spiritual energy. “Whenever you do this, do it in remembrance of me.”

(For Southwick only...) We hear the stories of how our spiritual ancestors built this church and what they had to do 250 years ago to make it happen. And what they had to do to put up this much of church 200 years ago, add the second part 100 years ago, and the third part in 1957. It is going to take physical energy, financial energy, and spiritual energy to keep our mission alive. “Whenever you do this, do it in remembrance of me.”

So, here we are, be it in Westfield or Southwick, as we join with Christians throughout the world to remember that Jesus Christ calls us to HIS table where all are welcome: sinners, saints, Pharisees, Sadducees, retirees, musicians, doubters, questioners, believers, and all who seek a relationship with him. World Communion Sunday reminds us all of Jesus’ words in John’s Gospel, “May they all be one as you are one.” Whenever we do any of this, may we do it in remembrance of Him. Even when we grumble...