

June 23, 2013

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

"You cannot be my disciple unless you take up your cross daily and follow me."

As I write this I am 35,000 feet over Colorado and experiencing turbulence on Southwest #177.

Turbulence! When it enters our lives, the shadow of the cross comes upon us, like the dark cloud right out the cabin window.

It happened in Omaha last Saturday. A twenty five year old man from St. Gerald Parish, was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Not a bad place...he was cutting someone's lawn, and a random shot from an enraged killer cut him down.

Think of the agony of his bereaved parents.

This is a cross almost beyond bearing.

And so, the gun violence rages on while our congress bows to the NRA

Gun lobby and does nothing and rings up a 10 percent approval rating.

Crosses come and go for everyone. But some can and should be avoided.

And maybe they would be were it not for sin. Congress sins by neglect and so do you and I.

Sin, plus human indifference, plus stupidity account for imposing too many crosses on innocent victims.

So what was Jesus talking about in this gospel?

That we should LOOK for crosses? Should we desire them?

That we should be machochistic? Hardly.

It is puzzling isn't it?

Maybe we have to put his words in context.

Most of the time he was speaking to the anawim...the little folks, the poor,

The despised....whose lives were hard every day.

And he was asking them to love their neighbor and to be compassionate despite the heavy burdens they bore.

This was asking a lot when your own situation was almost unbearable.

But then again maybe it is the suffering who are best equipped to be compassionate.

Sunday, Buddy and I visited Mary who suffers from terminal cancer. She always wants me to bring Buddy with me.

He looks at her with his brown eyes and wags his tail.

And Mary smiles and laughs. Earlier she had given me a little poem about the journey from Christmas to Easter, and I misplaced it and found it too late after Easter to post it here.

Now Mary's cross road has been to Pentecost and beyond.

Isn't it great that Buddy, my Irish/Mexican roommate can bring a smile to Mary a cross bearer?

Once I called and asked if I could bring Buddy to see Mary, and the nurse said she was sleeping. Later the nurse called and said, "Mary told me ALWAYS WAKE ME IF BUDDY IS COMING!"

What is the lesson for me? Despite heavy crosses born by so many people, it may only take a little love like from a wagging tail to cheer them.

When Jesus carried his own cross, even he had a helper...Simon.

So we are to bear one another's burdens and that may be a way we take up "our cross daily."

For we do not have to look very far to find other cross-bearers.