

2nd Sunday 2018

I have with me the New York Times Magazine section from two weeks ago. One of our community members “borrowed” last weeks so I never saw it and have been in “crossword withdrawal” all week! Thank God you can get the Sunday Times on Saturdays here in NY! So what about you? If you open up the magazine to the crossword puzzle, what catches your eye? The crossword or the ken-ken? Would you rather play with words or with numbers? Words? Numbers?

If you had a choice, would you rather solve a math problem or write a poem?

Would you rather play with Legos and build something or create a dance or a story or a play?

Depending on the answers to your questions, we could say that you are a left brain/logical or right brain/ creative/intuitive. Whether you are left or right, logical or creative, there are no hard and fast distinctions. The brain is simply one of God’s most amazing creations! Just think of all that the brain is capable of. Language/ logic/ creativity/imagination! Streams of consciousness! Dreams of unconsciousness!

Ok! I admit it. My homily today is very “stream of consciousness” And it all started with the “consciousness of a dream” Not my dream, but Samuel’s dream. The Lord speaks to Samuel in dreams, awaking him to consciousness but he doesn’t recognize the voice of God. And so he assumes it’s the reality that he knows. It must be the voice of Eli the elder calling him. This is one of those stories that catches my imagination. Can’t you just see in your minds eye this little boy waking up in the middle of the night and shaking Eli and saying, You Called? And Eli mostly unconscious saying, Go back to sleep! Which of you parents has not had that experience! On the third try, Eli comes to full consciousness and tells Samuel that it is the Lord who is calling.

But then what captured my imagination was the Lord calling the name Samuel. And I started thinking about all the names

we hear today in the scriptures! Samuel, Eli, John, Jesus, Andrew, Peter and Adonai, that's one of the Hebrew names of God. The name of God, YHWH that was revealed to Moses could not be spoken I AM WHO AM. So Adonai, Sovereign Lord.

But then another name jumped into my consciousness. The name of a friend called Joel. (In the scriptures Joel is the one who says, On that day I will pour out my spirit on all my sons and daughters and old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions) My friend Joel has Down Syndrome. I'd like to tell you the story of how I met him.

About 15 years ago I received an email from Len Peterson. I didn't recognize the email address but Len told me that he and his family lived in Melrose and that their youngest Son, Joel who had Down-Syndrome was a talented singer and dancer. The way he and his wife Rosemary found out about me "the dancing priest" was quite wonderful. Len described to me how one day Rosemary had gone into the back yard to bring some refuse to the compost heap. There on the "top of the heap" was a single page of the Boston Globe which Len told me they never read. Out of curiosity Rosemary picked it up and began to read about A Dancer's Christmas and the work of the Jesuit choreographer, Fr Bob Vereecke. Rosemary and Len knew that Joel had been praying for a "sign" from God. They felt that this single page from the Arts Section of the Globe had floated in on the "wings of an angel". Soon after receiving the email I was able to meet Joel and see for myself how gifted he was in so many ways. He began dancing with my company at Christmas and at other times in the year.

Joel for me always revealed who God is because Joel was so open to God's voice and God's spirit. There was nothing that got in the way. God was always catching Joel's attention. With Joel there were no "ifs ands or buts" about God. That's why I always thought of Joel as very much like Jesus. So whether you are analytical or creative, left or right brain dominant, each of us is "called by name" and invited to "Come and See" who God is.

I wanted to finish with a woman's voice. Since we heard so many male names in the scriptures today, I wanted you to hear the voice of Danielle Rose who composed a beautiful song. It is called God Is and I hope it helps you to imagine the God who is and who will be, who calls us by name and invites us to "Come and See"

GOD IS / Danielle Rose/ Defining Beauty

You want to know Me? You want to see My face?
I do not age with time; I do not fit into a space
I transcend the capacity of your eye, so who am I?
It is the question of the moment;
It is the question for all time
I am you, and you are mine

I am the beginning and the end
I am the faith in your believing
I am the color of truth
I am the dreamer of your dreams
I am the falling in your love
I am the words of a prayer
I am the silence in the music
I am the music in the silence

I am your father; I am your mother
I am the man who cannot cry
I am the story in your eyes
I am the orphan of war
I am the leper begging on the corner
I am the black slave in chains
I am the Muslim bride who cannot show her face
I'm the cross you carry again

I'm all you have forgotten
I am all that you have not been
I am in you - all of this is within you
Let the journey begin, Amen
I am in you, Amen