



Daily Reflections

April 20, 2020

Scripture

John 3:1-8

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

He came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born* from above.”

Nicodemus said to him, “How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother’s womb and be born again, can he?”

Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit.

Do not be amazed that I told you, ‘You must be born from above.’

The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Our Scripture Reflection

Nicodemus, a very powerful and influential member of the Jewish leadership council known as the Sanhedrin, came to Jesus “at night” because he was curious about Him but lacked faith in Him. When Jesus told him that one cannot see the Kingdom without having been born “from above”, Nicodemus is stopped in his tracks. The Greek adverbial phrase behind the words “from above” can mean one of two things:

1. To come from one’s mother’s womb a second time, “born again”
2. To be a part of the spiritual realm “from above”, from Heaven

Nicodemus, unfortunately, at this point in his relationship with Jesus can only understand His words literally, that one must crawl back up inside his mother’s womb and come out again.

Because he is still in the dark (at night), that is, does not yet possess faith, he is confused.

Food for your Journey

If the Church wants to remain vital and vigorous in the competitive marketplace for people's hearts and minds, it needs to sanitize the old biblical images. Right? Wrong!

"Reaching for a Salt Substitute" is the title of a sermon by the Rev. Donald J. Shelby. In it Shelby facetiously notes that:

"If Jesus were giving his Sermon on the Mount today, He would be advised to change one or two metaphors, especially his use of salt. I mean, salt has a negative health image today and has received bad press, along with sugar, red meat, eggs, and saturated fats. When I ask someone to pass the salt for my grapefruit, watermelon, or sliced tomatoes, eyebrows are raised, foreheads furrow with concern or disdain, as if I had committed adultery or some heinous crime. Sometimes I even get a mini-lecture on the health dangers of salt. So, Jesus would no doubt have to change his metaphor and say, 'You are the yogurt of the world,' or 'You are the oat bran of the world,' or 'You are the turnips or broccoli of the world.' That way, no one would be distracted by the metaphor's negative connotation."

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, I want, to be born from above, to be a part of Your way in Your Kingdom. Pour forth Your Grace upon me so that I may live faithfully the way You have set before me. Amen