



Daily Reflections

May 2, 2016

Scripture

John 15:26—16:4A

Jesus said to his disciples:

“When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me.

And you also testify,

because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I have told you this so that you may not fall away.

They will expel you from the synagogues;

in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God.

They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me.

I have told you this so that when their hour comes

you may remember that I told you.”

Our Scripture Reflection

After the Jewish uprising began, the Romans responded by sending a large force into the region which eventually led to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D. In an attempt to "purify" their religion some Jewish officials began to expel the early Christians from the synagogues that they were using for prayer. In today's Gospel text, we see that Jesus had foretold it all. What were the "outcast" Christians to do? They remembered the words of Jesus. They circled the wagons, so to speak, and met in large estate homes. There the Church was born and multiplied greatly. Jesus is and was faithful to His promises.

Food for your Journey

Alvah Dunning, known as "the Hermit Guide of Raquette Lake," was the most colorful of the famed Adirondack Guides of the 19th century. Wealthy young men from the cities, known as "sports," would hire wise old locals like him to lead them to the best hunting and fishing spots and teach them the ways of the wilderness.

Dunning, who lived alone in the woods when he wasn't guiding a hunting or fishing party, had a reputation for eccentricity, even cantankerousness. City folk kept seeking him out, anyway, because when it came to knowledge of the woods, Dunning had no peer.

He didn't always fit well into human society, as one contemporary observer pointed out:

"He lived in the woods all of the time, and for the most part alone. The human voice was less familiar to him than the noises of birds and animals, and he often seemed able to understand and speak their language. He could lure the timid mink from its hole by imitative chipping, and trick a frightened deer back to the water's edge by deceptive bleating with his throat and splashing with his hands."

That didn't mean Dunning was an expert on everything. One day, when one of the sports he was guiding through the woods mentioned something

about the world being round, he was incredulous. For quite some time after that, Dunning tried to entertain his other clients with the ridiculous story of the man who thought the world was round, but he was even more surprised that no one else thought it funny. Finally, he just filled a cup with water and turned it upside down, pouring its contents onto the forest floor. "Ain't that what would happen to yer lakes and rivers if yer turned 'em upside down? I ain't believin' no such tommyrot as that!"

Dunning died in Utica in 1902, while spending a rare night in a hotel on his way back from a sportsmen's show in New York City. He was asphyxiated by gas leaking from a lighting fixture in his room. There was nothing wrong with the fixture. It's just that when Dunning went to sleep, he blew the flame out, as one might blow out a candle or kerosene lantern, rather than turning off the gas supply.

Unlike this flawed human guide who demonstrated wildly uneven abilities, Scripture says the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth."

--Adapted from "Alvah Dunning, 1816-1902, The Hermit Guide.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You are always faithful and true to Your promises. Be with me through the power of the Holy Spirit, this day and every day to guide me in the way of Your truth and to protect me from evil. Amen.
