Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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"Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand" (Jer 18:6).

Jer 18:1-6; Matt 13:47-53

If Jesus told parables, it was because he came from a deep tradition of storytellers and poets. The image of the potter and vessels of clay in today's first reading was part of that rich memory from the Prophet Jeremiah. St. Paul would take up the image to describe the mystery of Christ we carry in our human frailty like "earthen

vessels.” This message inspired Jesuit John Foley to write the moving hymn of the same title based on Paul’s words (2 Cor 4:7). Listen to the song here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAZhIw49ULc\\2

The Incarnation is the central doctrine of our Christian faith. That God lived among us as a human being, sharing fully in our frailty, even to the point of death, is the source of our hope that we, too, will share the treasure of divine life. Baptized into Christ, we bring our human weakness to the lifelong process of transformation. The simple “clay” of our human experience is perfected by grace.

The parable of the net cast into the sea (Matt 13:47) offers this same message. The net catches all sorts of things, some worthless, others valuable. So, our daily experience is a catch-all of many distractions and opportunities, failures and successes. Not to worry, for the proof of our life in Christ is not that we never experience anything bad, but that at the end of the day we can sort through the day’s catch, keeping what is good and discarding what is not. This is what real human life is like – discernment and choices.

We rejoice to be earthen vessels, not made of gold or silver, yet still entrusted with the treasure of Christ, who is saving us one day at a time. Our human journey is the path to eternity, and every human experience, even those that are hurtful and discouraging, can be useful in our encounter with God’s mercy.

Feel the loving hands of God surrounding you and shaping you today. When you were new, sturdy and useful in ordinary tasks, God blessed you in the busyness of life. Perhaps you are worn and old, delicate enough to be saved on a shelf for special occasions, but you are still beloved for your familiarity. You hold the treasures of the community in your memories, and as Pope Francis reminded his audiences in Canada, the elderly are to be prized and protected as guides to the future. Isn’t this the joy of the Gospel?

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