

## Windows of Opportunity – 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C (8-11-13)

I had just visited someone at Illinois Masonic Hospital and was waiting for the 'L' to return back to St. Teresa. A man with a CTA uniform indicating was busy cleaning things up on the platform; he noticed me with my collar and approached me.

We had a wonderful conversation about his life, its ups and downs, but more importantly, its hopes. He engaged me about my life and ministry and couldn't figure out where St. Teresa of Avila Church was since he thought he knew all the parishes. This hard-working man lived the definition of faith from the *Letter to the Hebrews*: despite the fact that he couldn't see God, there were many realities in his life that made him certain of God's presence in his life: "...faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen." His children, his family, and his prayer rooted him in hope, giving him "evidence" of the unseen God.

My encounter with this man was given to me by God as a window of opportunity, a brief encounter in which God can be experienced. A generous God, who knows our tendency to become so preoccupied with the demands of life that we fail to encounter his presence, gives these *windows* to us.

Our busyness blinds us to these windows of opportunity. And when we pause long enough to gaze into this window, life changes...our perceptions are altered. The man on the platform gave me a window of opportunity to see through it into the mystery who is God. Perhaps we stay so busy to avoid looking through these windows, since our worlds may have to change.

In the gospel, Jesus tells parables about being wide awake and open to the God of surprise, the God who enters our lives in the places we least expect, like an 'L' platform. These "surprise" moments awaken us to our purpose, rooting us in the present moment, the only way God can be experienced: in the here and now: the present moment. These windows of opportunity are given to us hundreds of times daily. God wants us to look through them and be engaged so that we are transformed by the experience. The call to service that is so evident in the gospel, is also the call to us to become a *window of opportunity* for another person God places in our path.

As we look through the window of Abraham and Sarah, we see a God who calls us to let go of the neat, small worlds we live in and journey into new territories of the human heart....perhaps even new geographical territories. Age and the biological clock can never be an excuse to just stay "stuck." Once again, the God of surprises...

The God that Jesus revealed in his parables is the God who comes when we least expect it, so the he can become our servants — "I have come to serve and not be served." The tables have been turned and our worlds have been turned upside down. God wants to be *your* servant...he wants to wait on *you*!

My tables were turned when my friend on the 'L' platform asked me to take him to St. Teresa of Avila Church, right then and there. I was taken aback: he was evangelizing me. I led him to the church he now knows clearly exists. I reclined at the table and God proceeded to wait on me, serving me a feast of his Love and Presence.