

JUBILEE – 2016

1ST Reading: Ephesians 4: 1-6

2nd Reading: Vision and Journey, Ch. 5, Sec. 16-17

Gospel: Luke 11: 1-10

In praying with the readings chosen for this jubilee liturgy—and in thinking about the occasion we celebrate--I was somehow reminded of author Max DePree's image of a jazz band. He writes, "Musicians delight in improvisation. They listen intently to one another, and find ingenious ways to blend their individual talents. They're not sure where the riff may be leading, and neither is the audience, but the unpredictability of the outcome, far from causing anxiety, becomes a deliciously anticipated surprise. Arriving at a tidy conclusion of the piece is not the point. The joy is in the movement, the tinkering with the theme, the weaving in and out of each other's musical phrases. This image...suggests the rich variation that is possible once there is agreement on the basic melody."

Paul in today's first reading reflects on this "basic melody" to which we all—through Baptism and our life commitments—have agreed: "I urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, humble, gentle and patient, showing your love by being helpful to one another, and striving to preserve the unity of the spirit." What a rich variation have our celebrants displayed in living out this basic theme over a combined 735 years in community life! Many have "improvised" in various aspects of education, guidance, and music. Some have "blended individual talents" in library work, telemarketing, or finance. Others have "entered with their own

human brokenness” into communion with the poor and those in mission lands. Some have “spoken the Gospel Word” in parish and community service settings. All have graced us with their presence and prayer. While Jesus in today’s Gospel passage taught us to pray in the words of the Our Father, our jubilarians have shared in this recent issue of CELEBRATE their favorite ways of “tinkering with” this prayer theme!

At various times and in various ways our Sister-celebrants have taken their turns at directing the music. Truly an expression of servant leadership—the leader of the band has the beautiful opportunity of drawing the best out of other musicians.

Despite the unpredictability of the outcome, all have found “ingenious ways to blend their individual talents,” “weaving in and out of each other’s musical phrases” and speaking—even singing—their “word of hope.” Yet, great musicians, their teachers would be quick to tell us, are not BORN that way. They are MADE through hours and hours of dedication to mastering scales and patterns—perhaps for 25, 50, 60, 70, or 75 years.

I am told that a speaker once said, if we looked into word origins, he was sure we’d discover that the past tense of “THINK” is “THANK.” Today, as we think about the rich variation our jubilarians add to our basic Franciscan melody, we can’t help but give thanks for and with them.

May they—and we—continue to find “joy in the movement,” in “tinkering with the theme,” so that each of our lives becomes a “deliciously anticipated surprise” for our God, for one another, and for our world.

(S. Christa Franzer)