

Please note, this summer we are re-posting reflections from the 2018 B cycle.

[18th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Ex 16:2-4,12-15

Eph. 4.:17, 20-24

Jn. 6:24-35

By Steve Herro, O. Praem.

The Israelites grumbling against God in the wilderness (“...Would that we had died at the LORD's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!”) from today’s First Reading challenges me to wonder, “Why are children being separated from their parents on the Mexican-U.S. border? Why are minors being sexually trafficked? Why are companies dumping carcinogens in nearby air, water, and soil, with no apparent concern for the health of their neighbors? Why is law enforcement abusing young adults of color?”

Was God responsible for the Israelites lack of food in the desert? Is God responsible for the contemporary challenges faced by so many people described above? How does a homilist or faith-based parent, teacher, or counselor explain pain and suffering to his or her congregants, children, or other clients?

As you prepare your homily this weekend, consider linking the wandering Israelites to a Salvadoran, Honduran, or Guatemalan parent wandering our own desert. How can you help your audience empathize with the Israelites **and** the Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans? If God responded with food for the wandering Israelites, what is the appropriate response by us for the wandering Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans? You might start by reading Jesuit Fr. James Martin’s “Five things you can do to help immigrants at the border,” *America*, June 19, 2018.

For several weeks, we have walked with the author of the Letter to the Ephesians. Today’s Second Reading suggests that the writer is challenging the Ephesians to act on behalf of the teaching that they have received. More is expected of those who have been exposed to the Gospel of Christ and the tenets of Catholic social teaching. May we remind ourselves and our congregants, family members, and students of Luke 12: 48, “...Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”

I don't advocate instilling trepidation in our listeners, but rather, may we gently remind ourselves and each other that we are privileged to have been exposed to the Gospel and Catholic social teaching-- now we must act upon this knowledge.

Steve professed solemn vows to St. Norbert Abbey in 1991. He has served in justice ministries for his Abbey, the Diocese of Green Bay, and Catholic Charities USA. He enjoys blogging, reading, gardening, biking, tennis, lobbying legislators, and volunteering in the community.