

"How Beautiful"  
The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost  
Proper 14  
13 August 2023  
Trinity+St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
San Francisco, California

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I Kings 19:9-18  
Psalm 85:8-13  
Romans 10:5-15  
St. Matthew 14:22-33

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**Things I'm not going to preach on today.**

I was a bit anxious when I peeked at the Lectionary for this morning, wondering if the readings would meet the demands of the day. They did, magnificently. However, I'm not going to preach on most of them. I'm not going to preach on the beauty of silence that greets Elijah as goes to the Negev to meet God, and doesn't find him in the usual displays of divine might and power: a great wind, an earthquake, a blazing fire. But rather God was found in sheer silence.

Nor am I going to preach on the Gospel, where Christ is raised up as Lord ruling over the tempest, or of Peter (our patron's) attempt to follow Christ on the water. Although Jesus' mastery over the elements that Elijah had expected might prove to be interesting.

There is also a line from the psalm that might make for a wondrous homily, "*Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*" That too shall have to wait for another time and place.

And then there is the second reading from the Romans, especially this line: "*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*" I don't know if you have noticed that over the past few weeks there have been people who come into the church, the look of amazement and appreciation on their faces. They are always greeting and invited to stay, but often times they just take in the beauty of the place for a few moments, and then leave = perhaps to return at another time. Paul's letter to the Romans reminds me that it is a precious process of hearing and seeing good news, "*The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart.*" Things spoken and unspoken, things seen and unseen, things known and unknown – it is up to us to give a quiet voice to the silence of these visits. I can recall vividly one evening sitting in this place with a former rector, letting the place and the silence of holiness speak to us.

Well, I'd like to dwell a bit on the beautiful feet of those who bring good news. I think that on this day some thank yous are due to those who brought or who continue to bring good news to us – the good news of Jesus Christ. I am thinking of Fr. Robert Cromey, who for years served as rector of this parish, and who brought a prophetic

voice to this pulpit, and more often than not the Letters to the Editor section of the daily newspaper. He brought good news, he brought peace-making, he brought an attitude of tolerance, and help to emerging communities. How beautiful. I am thinking of the continuing ministry of this congregation, as it seeks to be not only a place of beauty, but a place where the beauty of good news can be seen and heard. I am thinking of Robert Guernsey and the choir here who bring the beauty of music, music that announces the Gospel, and the faith of countless composers and musicians. I am thinking of the beauty of the deaconate, who lead us in service to other, who guide us in our giving to those who have little. How beautiful. I am thinking of the beauty of the Bishop's Committee here, the Junior and Senior Wardens and other officers who make certain that this is a place of Eucharistic celebration and feasting = a table set for many. I am thinking of the beauty of all those visiting today, who have come to support Robert and Ann in the renewal of their marriage vows. Their support is good news. And the example of marriage and relationships is good news for those seeking and looking for significant others, and a renewed and collected family. I am thinking of the beauty of those who have come here in a search for God and for finding good news for their lives. I always liked Jan Bender's translation of the Beatitude – *"How blest are those who know their need of God – the kingdom of heaven is theirs."* I am thinking of the Book Club that Ann was instrumental in founding – which I still attend. The beauty of books, authors, and ideas is beautiful indeed. I am thinking of the beauty and the good news expressed in marriage, in remembering the vows that have brought people together, and bind them together in love. I am thinking of all those who work behind the scenes, in our marriages, in this parish, in our community – those who work for the good of others and how we ought to pray for their success.

All of these actions are an expression of the word, the word that is on our lips and in our hearts. So the beauty of the feet of those who bring good news is not limited to the episcopacy, or the priesthood, or the deaconate, or people in religious life, but rather it is part and parcel of who and what we are as the people of God – announcing to others the Good News. Thank you.

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