

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B – 2009

1. IT was amazing actually, that they both came to light in the same week.
2. ON the one hand the death of Aribert Ferdinand Heim, the Nazi doctor who earned the nickname the “Butcher of Mauthausen” for atrocities committed in the concentration camps of Germany during the Second World War
3. And on the on the other Richard Williamson, the schismatic Traditionalist Bishop who denies that any of it really took place.
4. It forces us to remember those horrible years.
5. And it forces us to question how on the one hand a doctor could cause such suffering in so many people
6. And how our church thorough this bishops rehabilitation, could cause so many people to relive it.
7. The easy answer is of course denial:
 - a. Heim refused to see his Jewish victims as little more than lab animals.
 - b. Richardson refuses to see the holocaust as little more than a rumor.
 - c. And Pope Benedict refused to see a holocaust-denying bishop as an insult to both the Jewish people and the Church’s integrity.
8. And yet while this is all true, our focus on Heim, on Richardson, on Benedict and ultimately on ourselves, reveals that we too are in denial; simply because we have forgotten something; or better still someone:
 - a. The victims.
 - b. The millions who suffered and died in those terrible camps.
 - c. And the countless millions more who were their families and friends.
9. We forget them of course, because
 - a. None of us want to remember the victims
 - b. None of us want to hear their stories
 - c. None of us want to face the fact that such things really happened.
 - d. We are afraid of what such things reveal about our sinfulness, the world’s injustice, and ultimately God’s absence.
10. Indeed it is precisely the horrifying injustice present in this world that has caused so many people to give up belief in God; and many others, evidently including Mr. Richardson himself, to give up belief in the holocaust.
11. And caused the rest of us simply to look away.
12. But Job will not let us look away.
 - a. His words in this morning’s first reading are the words of a man who has lost everything. His health due to disease, his wealth due to theft and destruction, his family due to natural disaster.
 - b. His life mirrors the sufferings of people in every age.
 - c. His life is the great reminder of the horrible injustice of this world.
 - d. And yet it is more; because we who know the story of Job know that all of it happens, because GOD let it happen.
 - e. And thus Job’s great temptation, and ours, is to deny that God cares; deny that God even exists., to, as Job’s friends tell him to do elsewhere in his story, curse God and die.
 - f. For where could God possibly be in the face of such suffering?

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13. And Mark will not let us look away either,
 - a. For his gospel presents the story of Jesus, who wades into the horrifying injustice of this world, healing it and casting out its evil.