

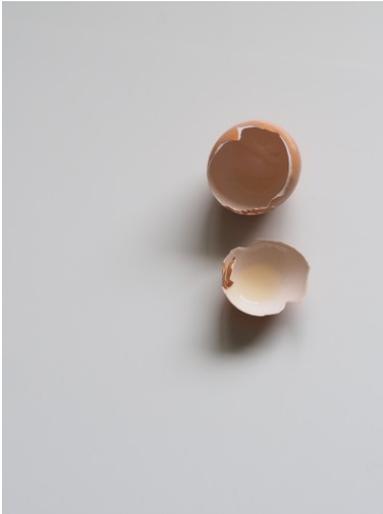
THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

September 27, 2020

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 18:25-28 † Philippians 2:1-11 † Matthew 21:28-32

Reflection by: Sister Gina Scaringella, OP



My heart broke when my beloved cat died a few months after I'd entered the congregation. When Jasmine, the ultimate scaredy cat, had moved into Sacred Heart Convent with me, I didn't feel sure she would adjust to the move. Nor did I know how she'd fare the following year, when I'd have to leave her with someone else so I could move to St. Louis for novitiate. But with hope, I had deliberately entrusted Jasmine to God. Then she died! *God, surely you knew this was not what I had in mind!*

My heartache became anger—an anger I feared I might never let go. When I vented to a spiritual mentor, he reminded me of the well-known verse from today's second reading: “[Christ Jesus] emptied himself...he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death” (Philippians 2:7-8). Though I had not died a physical death, I felt emptied. Like Jesus, I had humbled myself, too. I had acknowledged that I couldn't control whatever outcome lay ahead for Jasmine, and I had surrendered that outcome to God. In my small, imperfect way, I had tried to become obedient to the call I had heard.

Our suffering unites us with the human Jesus as well as with Christ the Eternal Word. This is true especially if we empty ourselves into the glory of God despite the pain it usually entails. Our suffering is “creaturely” suffering too, giving us communion with all of God's Creation.

During this Season of Creation, we claim our communion with Earth. We acknowledge the many ways that Earth empties herself for us. Routinely, we take more from her than she can continue to give.

After Jasmine's death, eventually, my emptied self knew fullness again—largely thanks to the gifts of Creation—time spent with sunsets and sea and the God who gives them to us.

How will our emptied Earth know fullness again? Holy Spirit, come.