

Rush hour pro musica
First Sunday of Lent
March 9, 2014
Matthew 4:1-11

On a cold January morning, hundreds of commuters rush through a Washington, D.C., metro station.

A little before 8 A.M. a young man stations himself at the subway entrance. He opens his case, takes out a violin and begins to play.

For the next 45 minutes, he performs works by Bach, Schubert and other masters.

Three minutes go by before someone slows down to listen for a few seconds before hurrying off.

Several more minutes go by before the violinist receives his first tip: a woman tosses a dollar in his case, never stopping to listen.

Sometime later, a commuter leans against the wall to listen, but glances at his watch and hurries off, clearly late for work.

The one who pays the most attention is a three-year-old boy; he listens with delight until his mother hurries him off.

Several other children stop and listen before they, too, are hustled off by their busy parents.

In the 45 minutes he played, only six people stop to listen for any length of time; about 20 people give him money. His total take for the impromptu concert: \$32.

When he finishes playing and puts his instrument back in the case, no one applauds or even notices that the music had stopped.

This concert actually took place.

The violinist was Joshua David Bell, age 46 yrs old, one of the world's most renowned concert performers.

He had played those intricate pieces on his Stradivarius violin - an instrument worth \$3.5 million.

Only one commuter actually recognized him.

Bell's playing incognito was arranged by **The Washington Post** as a part of a story on people's perception of beauty and taste and feeling.

But Washingtonians were too busy that morning to notice.

On this first week of our Lenten journey, so often in our busy commutes to and from everything and everybody, we miss a great deal of the beauty, the satisfaction, the meaning of our lives.

And in missing the beauty and meaning of life we also miss the presence of Christ in our midst.

And so the Spirit of God calls us each Lent to the desert, to re-connect with the "music" of God's compassion and peace.

The temptations of Christ that we see in the Gospels are our temptations.

The wilderness in which we struggle is never ending. The battle is life long.

During the Lenten season it is time to become aware of where we struggle with these issues in whatever situation we find ourselves in at the present time.

Whether it is in our homes, in our work, in our communities and in the world we need to examine the true values by which we are living.

It is a hard road but then if we persist we will discover the wisdom, loyalty, courage, and strength that we will need to face fear, betrayal, jealousy, suffering and sorrow in the world.

We can also say that we discover true selves in the struggle.

We look for the light in the midst of our darkness and where we can fan the flames of true compassion towards others.

Yes, maybe we need to take the advice of the theologian James Muillenburg.

He had said at one time that every morning one should read the daily news with all its latest crimes and tragedies before we affirm our belief in a loving God who is willing to share our pain and suffering and work within us as we face the world.

Lenten Tip: As a Lenten God Reminder: If you have a smart phone set 2 alarms during the day and say a short prayer such as the Our Father or Hail Mary to remind you of God's Presence.

Make this Lent a "desert time" and slow down for yourself, a time to look quietly and prayerfully beyond the temptations of everyday that draw us away from the presence of Christ so that we realize the promise our lives hold and the joys yet to be realized through Jesus Christ.

Stuff you need to Know" Some thoughts shared by Connections of MediaWorks, 7 Lantern Lane, Londonderry, N.H and of course some by myself through the power of the Holy Spirit