

Thursday, February 28

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Not as mortals see

"What do you see?" I queried my charges while I waved around a cup from the dining hall as we began evening vespers. It wasn't the first sermon I did, but it is certainly emblazoned on my memory. I had just driven back from Ohio where I had spent two days visiting a special young woman who would become my wife - working at her church camp.

"What do you see?" I kept repeating as I dangled it from my nervously shaking hand. They had the wisdom to keep focusing on the cup and not my strained voice or twitching face. They came up with all the 'right' answers - till I turned it over and they saw the blackened interior that I had covered with half-burned clouds of black soot from a candle.

Their reaction was worth the whole effort - ugh, yuk, ooh, aah. "Looks aren't everything. Don't be impressed with his looks and stature. I've already eliminated him. GOD judges persons differently than humans do. Men and women look at the face; GOD looks into the heart." *"Scripture taken from The Message. Copyright ? 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."*biblegateway.com/versions/?action=getVersionInfo&vid=6

I was the fake. I was the sham. I was the put-on. I was the deceiver. I was the one trying to impress with my carefully plotted set-up that would mislead them as I asked my question. God looked into my heart - and found a blackened interior even as I spoke.

A woman from the US recently took a pilgrimage to visit the Holy Land and recounts one thing she learned from her guide as they came to the Temple Mount and visited the Wailing Wall - about wax. The guide pointed to the massive marbles and asked if anyone knew the word 'sincere.' This led to an expose of the world of antique sales where people would find a marred marble, fill the holes and cracks with wax, polish the surface, and pass it off as the finest goods. Trustworthy dealers would explain that their marbles were *sin - cere*, without wax. What do you see in me, God?

A Way to Pray - "The Jesus Prayer" from PCUSA website

"The Jesus Prayer" refers to a short prayer, the words of which are: '**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner,**' constantly repeated. The Jesus Prayer is known to innumerable Orthodox and many other Christians as a form of devotion that can be used at any moment, whatever the situation. The main emphasis is on the repetition of the prayer; it can be said while sitting, walking, or working, silently or aloud.