16 OT-C “Expect Greatness”

What do you expect to get from being here today? Do you have any expectations this morning? This is an important question because our expectations focus our attention. What we expect to see strongly influences what we are able to see.

Abraham expected a blessing from God. Kept his eyes peeled for it. He'd been through a long journey following the promises of God. His expectation grew out of that journey. So, Abraham was watching for angels. Abraham expected a blessing which made him attentive. It gave him the eyes to see God when God came close.

What we expect to see strongly influences what we are able to see. Expect the worse and you will find it. Expect the best and it will find you.

Back in 2003 when I created Notre Dame Academy at Saint Lawrence with Fr Tom Gentile and Fr Don Ryan many of us expected Notre Dame to succeed. We expected its success. Therefore, we had eyes attentive to advocacy, teamwork, service. Trust was the anchor of our expectation, trust in God and trust in one another. We chose to have this expectation of success.

The advantage of this expectation? Our attention was rooted in hope. Living out of this hope then colored everything else we saw. Shaped our souls.

There were others around us that expected Notre Dame to fail. They expected failure. Whereas we had eyes to see advocacy, they saw conspiracy. Where we saw teamwork, they saw selfishness. Where we saw service, they saw manipulation and deceit. Where trust was the anchor of our expectation, doubt anchored theirs.

There was an advantage to their expectation. Their attention was not rooted in hope (they said it was rooted in reality.) So, they could never be disappointed, only surprised. Yet cynicism within does have an effect on people. Like our hope-filled expectation, their doubt-filled expectation colored all they saw and shaped their souls.

We have a choice in our expectations and these expectations focus our attention, shape our souls. So, what are you expecting of God today?

Martha could not see what Mary saw, could not seek what Mary sought: a blessing from our God drawn close. Instead, she got advice: “Martha, Martha, your attentions are focused on many things. One thing only is important, and Mary has chosen it. You choose it too.”

What we expect strongly influences what we are able to see. What do you expect from God today?

Martha comes around in the end. She takes Jesus’ advice. Watching for Jesus, expecting a miracle, Martha runs out to meet him as he comes to raise Lazarus. Jesus says to her “I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me even if he dies will live and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Martha responds, “Yes Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

This same Jesus who draws close to us today. May our hope be rewarded.