

Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community

12TH ORDINARY SUNDAY

Cycle B - June 20, 2021



OPENING PRAYER

Guide: *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, Most High,*

All: **The just one shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.**

Leader: *They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

All: **They shall bear fruit even in old age; vigorous and sturdy shall they be.**

Guide: *We invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit:*

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send, Lord your spirit and renew the face of the earth.

Oh God, that you have instructed the hearts of your faithful with the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us through the same spirit that always enjoy her divine consolation. By Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING [Job 38 (1), (8-11)]

The Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said:

Who shut within doors the sea, when it burst forth from the womb; when I made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling bands? When I set limits for it and fastened the bar of its door, and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled!

The book of Job raises the problem of unjust suffering. The author invents a character that despite being very faithful to God suffers a series of calamities: He enjoyed great prosperity and was surrounded by an abundant family, but he has to suffer the loss of all his children, his property and on top of that, acquired a terrible disease. Job, of course, rebels against so much pain and screams his anguish and claim. Then three characters appear who try to comfort him. But they tell him that everything bad is a consequence of sin. Job, who had been an exemplary man, is not very happy with this "help" of the three characters. Then a fourth character appears, named Elihu who claims the lack of trust in God's compassion and mercy. Elihu highlights the attributes of God and highlights the pedagogical attributes of suffering.

Finally, God emerges in the midst of the storm (it is the passage in this reading) and finally gives an answer to Job. And it's a bit of a weird answer, because it's more of a series of questions. The answers to these questions allow us to know God more, although they leave unresolved the issue of the mystery of suffering, which now remains in the background.

At the end of the book, God restores Job's former prosperity. In this life. And it is that by the time this book was written, there was still no awareness of a life after this life, in which the rewards (which we Christians long for) can be received.

(1) Read Job 36:15. Although no pain or suffering comes from God, who is all good, suffering serves to draw us closer to him. Why do you think one seeks God in difficult times?

(2) When we offer him part of our goods, or apply some talent in favor of God's works, we are only giving him back part of what He has given us. However, the suffering is ours, and it has not been given to us by God, and we can offer it to him. Discuss this idea.

(3) There is also the case of people who, in the face of difficulties, turn away from God. Obviously, it is because of a lack of faith that these things happen. Would you dare to assure today that your faith is strong enough to withstand the onslaught of a storm of difficulties in your life?

SECOND READING [2 Corinthians 5 (14-17)]

Brothers and sisters:

The love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died. He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh; even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer. So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

The next three Sundays present us with fragments of the second letter to the Corinthians. Today's fragment is found within a passage that tells us about the courageous proclamation of the Gospel and the trust that God has placed in the apostle.

The apostle reflects on the meaning of the act of Jesus Christ. God became incarnate in the human person of Jesus Christ and in this way he could know death. And in doing so, he gave it a new meaning. Death is no longer the end of everything, but the beginning of a life that will never end. And it is that the Christian lives protected by this faith. When they live their faith to the full, they will change their old way of life for a way of life that is proclaimed to all through the Gospel of Christ. They become a new creature, can no longer remain being the same, because the faith of Christ has transformed them.

- (1) Do you think that "not living for ourselves" can make a person a "new creature"? Explain.
- (2) The text says "The love of Christ compels us." What can the love of Christ push us to? What actions do you put into practice that other people who do not yet know Christ would not dare to do?
- (3) There is a short prayer: "Lord, I believe in You, but increase my faith." What can you do to help God grow your faith?
- (4) If your faith increases, do you think you will experience more changes in your way of leading life? Why?

GOSPEL [Mark 4 (35-41)]

On that day, as evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples: "Let us cross to the other side." Leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up.

Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion.

They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

In this text it is read that "Jesus slept." Remember that throughout the Bible, when it speaks of "sleep" it is not simply the much needed rest that our body needs to replenish energy. In the Bible, dreaming has a different connotation. God reveals himself to many biblical characters in dreams. It is as if to enter into perfect intimacy with Him, it is necessary to disconnect from the world, just as it happens when we sleep. At that moment when the disciples were terrified, Jesus Christ was in perfect communion with the Father. Therefore, upon awakening, he can transmit all the strength and peace that this communion brings. We have already reflected on how fears are a manifestation of a lack of faith and trust in God. We have to continue living in a world that subjects us to all kinds of problems and it is natural for us to experience fear. It is the same thing that these fears do not take control of our lives, but, with the help of the grace that Jesus Christ himself transmits to us, we manage to tame them, which otherwise would become indomitable beasts that will torment us all our lives. .

- (1) Read Luke 8:22-25. Compare. What strikes you about this text comparison?
- (2) Have you had experiences in which God seems to be absent? Have you been robbed of calm and confidence?
- (3) Imagine the story this way: On a shore, there are low feelings, including fear and lack of trust in God. Jesus invites you to get on a boat that will take you to another shore, with the promise of a life free from the burdens of life on "this shore." However, the day can be stormy, and put to the test your desire to make the trip that will need to be completed to savor the fruits that are obtained on "the other shore". Read Exodus 14:31 and then Exodus 16:3. Do you find it funny to know what others do, but what perhaps you have also done when you allow yourself to be covered by fears that are not without a way to express your lack of confidence in God?
- (4) How many times in your life have you acted in a similar way? What can we do to prevent it from happening again?
- (5) There are always people around us who could benefit from a few words of encouragement and hope when faced with difficulties. What would be the best attitude: lecturing them, telling them about a God in whom they still do not believe, or showing them your love and solidarity as a Christian, simply by being by their side (and of course, praying for them)?

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees can propose their own needs of prayer)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we meet, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father ...**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*