

## 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

- The Responsorial Psalm...sums up the theme...of today's readings:
  - *"May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us.*
    - *So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation."*
  - The psalm asks the Lord...to show His compassion...to all the nations.
    - That means the Gentiles...
    - and bringing salvation even to them.
- And from the perspective of ancient Israel...this would have seemed really bizarre.
  - Because the Gentiles were basically the enemies of God and His people.
    - They persecuted Israel...killing their daughters and sons.
    - And they had horrible practices that were contrary to God's law.
    - Could salvation...really be open to them?
  - I mean we're talking about people like the Romans.
    - They were known for leaving baby girls...to die of exposure to the elements.
    - Could salvation be open to them?
  - And what about the Canaanites...
    - the ones known for sacrificing their children to pagan gods...
    - could God really offer them the same?
- While the possibility of the Gentiles receiving salvation...
  - doesn't strike us...with quite as much alarm...
  - we must remember this essential truth from our readings:
    - All people are invited to the feast.
    - No one is beyond God's mercy - NO ONE!
- If we were to put this into today's standards...it would be like saying:
  - *"No one is excluded from God's kingdom. . . not even members of ISIS or Boko Haram...those Islamic terrorists that are blowing up churches...and brutally raping and killing Christians."*
  - It was shocking like that for the Jews to hear our readings.
- Make no mistake...repentance for sin is not optional.
  - Repentance for a life lived against God's will...
    - is a must for any true conversion.
  - Still...the lesson is no less astonishing:
    - God's grace really can transform anyone!
- And thanks be to God that it is that way...
  - that God has opened His covenant to other people...
    - or most of us would not be here.
  - Who of us has Jewish blood in our family line?
    - Who of us is directly descended from the Chosen People...very few I'm sure.
  - So thanks be to God that He did open up the covenant...
    - or we wouldn't be worshipping the Lord today.

- But our First Reading...is even more shocking than that.
  - Not only is salvation possible open to all people...
  - but those foreigners...
  - those same ones who do such horrible things...
  - some of them are even going to be priests!!!
- You can probably guess where the Lord took me from there...because I'm one of them.
  - I wasn't a member of the chosen people...
    - not even a member of the Catholic Church...
    - when God called me to be a priest.
  - And the truth is...our Gospel today...
    - it has always hit me right here (heart)...
    - when it comes to my vocation.
  - Because I know full well...that I should not be here...and yet...
    - much like we heard in our Gospel today...
    - a scrap...a tiny morsel...
    - it fell from the Master's table...
    - and here I stand.
- I've always seen this Gospel in a couple of different ways.
  - I've seen it as a blessing for me...but also as challenge to many of you.
  - Let me explain.
- How blessed I am to be Catholic...let alone to minister at God's altar!
  - But why did that scrap fall?
    - Why did it need to fall...because we certainly need priests don't we?
  - I firmly believe...that a part of the reason I was called to be a priest...
    - is because not enough Catholic families foster vocations.
    - Not enough encourage their sons and daughters to be open...
    - even to the possibility...
    - that God could be calling them...
    - to the priesthood...the diaconate or the consecrated life.
  - And that was only reinforced during my time as Vocation Director.
    - I can't tell you how many times...
      - I would meet with a young person who was really torn.
    - Because they strongly felt God calling them one way...
      - and their family and friends were...
      - not only lacking in support...
      - but actively tugging the other way instead.
    - I've even seen parents disown their children...all because of God's call.
  - The reasons why are many...
    - sometimes it's cultural...
      - in some families...
      - unless a child becomes a doctor or a lawyer...
      - then anything else...
      - even the priesthood is seen as a step down and that can cause shame.

- Or maybe it's a case of a child...
      - who needs to take over the family business...
    - Or maybe the parents...
      - simply do not understand the beauty of a life...
        - lived in service to the Lord .
      - And they don't want their child to live such a lonely life.
        - Trust me...my life is anything but!
  - Make no mistake...
    - a vocation like the priesthood is a cross...
      - but so is married life!
    - And that Cross...
      - if it's the one that Christ wants us to bear...
      - well then it's the only way to true and eternal happiness...
      - and what parent doesn't want their child to be happy?
  - So please...
    - encourage your children to be open to these vocations....
      - to be open to the Lord.
    - But please also don't force them!
      - Because it's just as bad to go to the opposite extreme.
    - That decision...
      - is ultimately between them and the Lord alone.
    - As family and friends...
      - it's up to us to encourage...to support...to pray.
- Ultimately...
  - I know that my calling to the priesthood...
    - wasn't just because...
    - someone else among God's chosen people said no.
  - God's covenant...really is open to all peoples!
    - He desires all people to become Catholic...
      - and to become one in Him.
    - And so...from the first moment of my conception...
      - He not only called me to be Catholic...
      - but also a priest...
      - and I thank God for both of them this day!
- Vocations are but one important side note for our readings today.
  - The main theme is still that of salvation...being open to all people.
    - But that doesn't mean that all people will be saved.
  - We cannot presume to think that...
    - just because we come to Church...
    - or just because we are Catholics...or even a priest...
    - that we will be saved.
  - Jesus tells those who have that particular mentality that:
    - Prostitutes and tax collectors will enter the Kingdom before you.

- It's only those who repent...
  - only those who convert...
  - only those who grab hold of the scraps...
  - that fall from the Master's table.
  - Only they have the best chance of being saved.
- And those scraps...those graces...
  - they are falling all around us...
  - like manna...
  - raining down from Heaven.
- So grab hold and hang on to them for dear life...
  - beginning with the Eucharist...
  - right now...
  - or as soon as you can come.

I wanted to also give a quick update on a couple of things at the parish.

Sound system in the church:

As you may have seen or heard from others, we are having a new sound system put into our church thanks in large part to the generosity of a few donors. It's been in the works for a long time and we were just ready to install when the pandemic struck and the Archdiocese froze all projects but it is now nearing completion. ListenUp is doing the work and they are among the best in the business. I also added a camera to the project that will be wired directly into the sound system so we can begin to record/stream Masses like most other parishes. I gave up after many, many failed attempts at trying other means! The system won't be fully functional until hopefully later this week so keep praying to Good St. Joseph to intercede for those doing the work!

Year end financials:

We hope to get our financial report out to you relatively soon. I believe we usually get it out in October. This year we hope to give you more details than in the past given all the variables that we've been dealing with. We also hope to give a clearer breakdown on the school's financials as a distinct ministry of the parish so that school parents have a better understanding of what's happening with tuition and how much support is coming from the church. Stay tuned. Our annual Big Event was record breaking and brought in more money than ever! Thank you for your generosity there! And I also want to thank you for your incredible generosity to the offertory at Mass that continues despite the pandemic. While down, we were only down by about \$13,500 from last years total of \$478,460. Thank you so much for those who have made the transition to online giving and continue to support the work of the parish and of the Lord!