

Discipleship: Grow, Go, Pray

1st Reading: Is 5:1-7

2nd Reading: Phil 4:6-9

Gospel: Mt 21:33-43

Dear sisters & brothers in Christ,

Below are some thoughts for your reflection based on today's Mass readings.

GROW AS A DISCIPLE: PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Have you ever had that feeling that all is right with the world? Perhaps it's the cool breeze on a crisp fall day, holding a newborn baby for the first time, or watching your friends or family enjoying each other's company around the dinner table. These are grace-filled moments that bring to mind St. Paul's words today which speak of "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding." It can be all too easy to lose sight of them amid the stresses of daily life and a news feed dominated by negativity and catastrophic events. Paul, never one to shy away from taking a stand, is not asking us to bury our heads in the sand, however. His Letter to the Philippians encourages us to "have no anxiety at all," and turn our thoughts to "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious." In doing so, we can not only counter the negativity, but persevere in faith as we confront the challenges of 2020.

GO EVANGELIZE: PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Paul goes on to say, in that same reading: "Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you." I think Paul just offered us the secret to a happy life! Allow this passage to speak to you today. Allow God's peace to permeate your heart and calm the unrest that can so easily creep in these days. And then pray that you can be the true, honorable, and gracious presence in another's life. Send this passage to a friend who may be hurting in some way, and invite him/her to think of a time recently when they felt the presence of God, the peace of God, in their life. And then offer to accompany them in their struggles – walk beside them and encourage them to "think about these things" that are excellent or worthy of praise.

PRAY: Focus on the encouragement of St. Paul's words today and pray Psalms 100, 136, and 148. Pray these sacred hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and then suggest that you pray them together with your friend.

Also, on the next page of the bulletin, you will find our parish Novena for this week; Novena to Our Lady, Mother of Good Counsel. Pray the Novena every day throughout this week. Pray it at home with your family and entrust yourself to care and protection of the Mother of God, Mary Most Holy. Send it to friends and invite them to pray with you.

- *Father Anthony Ahamefula*