

2020 February 02

*Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

**Readings:**

*First: Zephaniah 2.3; 3.12-13, "They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord." (12b)*

*Psalm 146, "The Lord opens the eyes of the blind." (8a)*

*Second: 1 Corinthians 1.26-31, 'God chose what is weak in the world'. (27b)*

*Gospel: Matthew 5.1-12, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'. (3a)*

***"Not many of you were wise"!***

In the letter to the Corinthians St. Paul was telling them that not many of them were wise when God called them (1 Corinthians 1:26). The social structure of their time was not much different from that of ours. Paul was talking to people of the kind just like us. However, if someone were to tell us today that not many of us are wise, we are likely to brand that one as a senseless and stupid person, and we will not let that one go free! Because our presumption about ourselves is likely to be the opposite; we are the wise and powerful ones as individuals, as a people and as a nation, we presume!

We hear today Jesus proclaiming the Beatitudes. Have an honest look into our own souls and see if we feel comfortable with these utterances of Jesus. Are there not among us those who think that these Beatitudes are just irrelevant for our times? Jesus called Blessed those who were 'poor, mourning, meek, hungry, merciful, pure in heart, persecuted, and the like. Would we be positively willing to be any one of these, except may be 'the merciful'?

Zephaniah was prophesying in the midst of an impending doom of war and destruction. He called on the people, "seek the Lord, all you humble of land, for I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly, ....., the remnant of Israel; and no one shall make them afraid" (Zephaniah 2:3-12). We have to know that it was from this remnant that the Lord later raised a people for himself from whom the Messiah came! The truth is that Jesus is still seeking the ones belonging to these categories to bless and also to recruit into his kingdom in order to send them on his mission. Our world is saying no to these.

In an effort to eliminate pain it is inflicting the greatest pain to its citizens. If not, what is abortion, euthanasia and the like? They do not reduce pain, instead they just annihilate people. In the abortion process severe and cruel pain is inflicted on a human child, sensible, sensitive and fully alive. We must learn that pain and pleasure are part of human existence; that endurance of pain and enjoyment of pleasure have to go hand in hand in order to reach the final harmony and our true destiny. We should realize in the light of our faith and after the mission and model of Jesus on the cross that pain and suffering are salutary not only for us but for many others. Saving humanity is along with Jesus is our work, our vocation and our mission. *"Blessed are those who mourn..."*