

2020 August 23

Twenty first Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Isaiah 22.15. 19-23, "I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David." (2a)

Psalms 138, "On the day I called, you answered me" (3a)

Second: Romans 11.33-36, "Who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?" (35)

The Gospel: Mathew 16.13-20, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (13b)

The gates of Hades will not prevail

There are many a drama in the scripture that depict enthroning and dethroning. Today's readings have two of them. In Isaiah there is the dethroning of Shebna and enthroning of Eliakim. The key to the house of David, the house of Judah, is given to Eliakim, who is given the final authority to open and close. In the gospel Jesus establishes the process to dethrone Satan and to bring about God's reign by giving the keys of heaven into the custody of Peter, empowering him to make binding decisions on the household of God. In and through this God's reign is being established for all times.

Ever since the appearance of man on earth there has been fight, enmity, hatred, and war, fights between good and evil. In the bible we find a war being waged between the angels of God and the fallen angels along with the Satan, that is, between angels and demons, between God and Satan.

Human mind is a living battlefield, good and evil, both sides trying to get the upper hand. We are inclined to think that the evil is winning. Often we find less signs of goodness on earth. Yes, there is fight, there is evil on earth. However, the words of Jesus that the gates of Hades will not prevail give the assurance that evil will not have the final victory. We will have to be involved in the process of defeating Satan, the evil one. Jesus has shown us the way, which is of love, forgiveness, forbearance, tolerance, etc. Jesus taught us to fight evil with goodness, hatred with love, pride with humility, and self-centeredness with altruism. The Cross of Christ is our principal weapon.

Jesus reaffirmed the creation story of the bible by establishing that all human beings are the sons and daughters of the same one God, whereby all of them are brothers and sisters. In order to gain life he said we have to give it up, he did it, and he gained life in a much superior way, a life that is glorious and everlasting. He tells us that he is the Way for us to walk. He is also the Truth, which we must know and appropriate. By following his way and attaining the truth that he is, we will find and possess Life, which again is Jesus. In order to win over the evil that is so prevalent in the world the only path is that which Jesus taught and lived on earth. Finally each of us must find an answer of our own to his question, "*Who do you think that I am?*" A proper answer to the question, '*who do you think that you are?*', will enable us to answer this question!

Fr. George

