

2020 September 06

Twenty-third Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Ezekiel 33.7-9, "I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel" (7a)

The Psalm 95, "O come, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker." (6b)

Second: Romans 13.8-10, "Love does no wrong to a neighbour." (10a)

Gospel: Mathew 18.15-20, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (20)

Christ is present among us!

We hear a lot about inner, physical, and spiritual healings and miracles in Charismatic and evangelical gatherings. They are often true and real. They happen when they are together in the name of Christ. The leaders in such gatherings exhort and persuade the gathered to cleanse themselves from all that is against love, to repent over their sins, to truly forgive from the bottom of their heart those who have offended them, and to reconnect with them in love.

In the presence of Christ when people are together and are in true love and are of one mind, the Spirit acts through healings and miracles. Some people ask why such miracles happen in the so-called charismatic gatherings, and not in our regular weekly/daily worship gatherings, wherein also Christ is present in the midst of the people gathered in his name? Christ is truly present in our midst, and it is his living body and blood we consume. However, we are not properly present to him and to his body, the Church.

We do not dispose ourselves to be in his presence amid his Church and to receive his body and blood by cleansing ourselves from ill feelings, hatred, envy, and enmity and keeping our grudges and resentments. We do not let go of our hurts, prejudices and injuries, the unnecessary burdens we carry. With the bindings of such burdens we do not allow the Spirit of God to work in us, heal us, and make us whole. We do not take seriously the presider's invitation at the beginning to repent over our sins and ask the Lord's forgiveness. We often forget the words of our Lord who said, "*If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father who sees in secret will forgive your trespasses.*" (Matthew 6.15).

We must listen to St. Paul who tells us today that all commandments are summed up in these words, "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Romans 13.9c) Each of us is a watchman/woman for the other as Prophet Ezekiel is made to say by God in today's first reading. And in that capacity, we may have to tell sometimes to our brothers and sisters as Jesus did, "*take up your bed and walk.*" (Mark 2.13) Once we are truly devoid of all the bad things described above, we will be empowered to do and allow the miracles to happen in the gatherings of God's people. Let us honestly believe what Jesus said, "*Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.*"

Fr. George

