

2021 August 22

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading:

First: Joshua 24.1-2a, 15-17, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (15c)

The Psalm: 34, "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous." (15a)

Second: Ephesians 4.32-5.1-2, 21-32, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church." (5.25)

The Gospel: John 6.53, 60-68, "No one can come to me unless it is granted them by my Father." (65b)

To the Father, to the Son

The Father grants the Grace to know the Son who ultimately leads us to the Father. By listening to the Son, we are enlightened to know and move to the Father. The Father and the Son along with the Spirit gather us to their kingdom. Each of us has a story behind us, which would tell us how this process of the Father granting the Grace to reach the destiny by first leading us to the Son and enabling to listen to his words.

Joshua's parting instruction and announcement to the people of Israel is a great example of remembering the salvation history. He recounts to the new settlers in the promised land the story of their origin, the journey they and their ancestors went through and where they were at that time, beginning from the call of Abraham. After telling the story Joshua invites them to express their desire either to stick on to this amazing God or, if they so desire, to go the gods of their new-found land. Before he gives them a chance to express their will, he expressed his will and resolve to stay with this amazing God of their ancestors.

Today when we listen to the invitation of Jesus to understand him, his mission, and the gift of his body and blood for the nourishment of our soul and our life, by which he also intended to unite us together into one body, we need to go back to our own story, the stories of our ancestors and the way they and we have been led to this point where we are. Only when we become fully appraised of this our story will we be enlightened to declare like Joshua, "*As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*" (Joshua 24.15) Once we have accepted the Lord and resolved to serve him alone, we need to follow the directions of the leaders God sends to guide us. St. Paul was one such with many instructions to be on the way of the Lord. In the letter to the Ephesians today he instructs us how to practice the love, with which the Lord Jesus loved us. Basically, our love should begin at home in the family, in the love between husband and wife, between parents and children. From the love nurtured in the family we move to love those outside our intimate family, which is the larger family of all the children of God.

There is plenty to give and to take in the whole process of love. Each one will have to forget the self to love the other, be it the spouse, children or the members of the larger family of God. This is what we call unselfish love, altruistic love, Christian love, true love, which proceeds from God alone. With such love we are truly the children belonging to God's big family. When we are in this love we are already in the grip of the Father who leads us to the company of the Son Jesus. At this point we will understand and appreciate the Jesus who offers his body and blood as our food and drink.