

22nd Wednesday II

Reading 1 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-9

*Brothers and sisters,
I could not talk to you as spiritual people,
but as fleshly people, as infants in Christ.
I fed you milk, not solid food,
because you were unable to take it.
Indeed, you are still not able, even now,
for you are still of the flesh.
While there is jealousy and rivalry among
you,
are you not of the flesh, and walking
according to the manner of man?
Whenever someone says, "I belong to
Paul," and another,
"I belong to Apollos," are you not merely
men?*

*What is Apollos, after all, and what is
Paul?
Ministers through whom you became
believers,
just as the Lord assigned each one.
I planted, Apollos watered, but God
caused the growth.
Therefore, neither the one who plants nor
the one who waters is anything,
but only God, who causes the growth.
He who plants and he who waters are
one,
and each will receive wages in proportion
to his labor.
For we are God's co-workers;
you are God's field, God's building.*

PSALM 33:12-13, 14-15, 20-21

*Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he has chosen for his own
inheritance.
From heaven the LORD looks down;
he sees all mankind.*

*From his fixed throne he beholds
all who dwell on the earth,*

*He who fashioned the heart of each,
he who knows all their works.*

*Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield,
For in him our hearts rejoice;
in his holy name we trust.*

Gospel LUKE 4:38-44

*After Jesus left the synagogue, he entered
the house of Simon.
Simon's mother-in-law was afflicted with
a severe fever,
and they interceded with him about her.
He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and
it left her.
She got up immediately and waited on
them.*

*At sunset, all who had people sick with
various diseases
brought them to him.
He laid his hands on each of them and
cured them.
And demons also came out from many,
shouting, "You are the Son of God."
But he rebuked them and did not allow
them to speak
because they knew that he was the Christ.*

*At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a
deserted place.
The crowds went looking for him, and
when they came to him,
they tried to prevent him from leaving
them.
But he said to them, "To the other towns
also
I must proclaim the good news of the
Kingdom of God,
because for this purpose I have been
sent."
And he was preaching in the synagogues
of Judea.*

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Paul is pretty tough with the people he had brought to Christ in Corinth. He had come. He had preached. They had responded with great enthusiasm to his evangelization, and Paul had moved on in his mission to other communities.

But, the Corinthians then had taken the Gospel and “improved” upon it in ways not consistent with example of Christ. That led to parties and factions who followed this person or that, of Greek philosophy or Hellenistic Judaism, and of lofty spiritualism, forgetting the reality of the cross. They even pitted the preaching of Paul against his fellow disciple, Apollos, who had followed Paul in evangelizing the people of Corinth.^[1]

Paul still claims the Corinthians as brothers and sisters, but calls them infants. They are not “all that” as they see themselves. Paul is the mother figure who gives them milk, as they are not yet ready for solid food. He chastises them... and nurtures them.

Paul reminds them that he and Apollos are merely God’s instruments, His co-workers. Don’t look toward Paul or Apollos as spiritual leaders, look to Jesus, whom they preach. While Paul planted the seed and Apollos watered, they were truly one in their joint service to God for the love of His people.

Don’t we see something like that today? In our Church, we have people who are Pope Francis people, or for Pope Benedict XVI, or for any of the previous Popes whose distinctive personal charisms inspired their particular followings. Would not each of these Holy Fathers direct us to 1 Corinthians and proclaim, *but only God, who causes the growth.*

Parties and factions have been with us for all history. Maybe because of my egotism, I feel that the situation is especially exasperating today. I see it in my Catholic Church. I see it in the greater Christian Church of thousands of denominations. We find ourselves opposed to other religions which speak of love and the golden rule, but who do not acknowledge the Holy Trinity.

We see it in our society, our economics and politics. We seem to feel that there is a limited amount of goods that need to be obtained for ourselves or we may find ourselves to be like the others without.

We organize and utilize social media to find others with our bent or perspective. We follow those with charisma who ascend into leadership. Can we trust them to act as God’s instruments of reconciliation? May we look to the overarching principles of good that transcend our divisions.

In our politics, let us engage with each other under the ideals of our Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights, the idealistic vision of those who were personally flawed.

In our economics and politics, let us remember that our world was created with sufficiency for all. Let us engage in the messiness of democracy and the free enterprise system without making others victims.

And in our human relationships, let us recover our faith that we are all children of God?

So much of this seems “pie in the sky” and idealistic “kum ba ya”. It absolutely is. There is no human power on earth that could deliver on these hopes. It is of some note that *kum ba ya* is originally a song of appeal to God to come and help those in need. ^[ii]

Whatever our service, may we be one like Paul and Apollos, as co-workers of God.

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by Dcn. Pat

^[i] Mary Ann Getty, First Corinthians Second Corinthians, Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, p. 23

^[ii] Winick, Stephen (Summer–Fall 2010). "The World's First 'Kumbaya' Moment: New Evidence about an Old Song" (PDF). Folklife Center News, [Library of Congress](#). Retrieved March 1, 2014