

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith In Laity Corner



20th Sunday Ordinary Times

Bold Voices

Readings Is. 56:1,6-7/Mt. 15:21-28

With the current state of our world, there is the feeling, at times, that humanity is under siege. Moreorless, maybe it is!!! As one tries to assimilate the events which appear to be thrown at us so serious and furious from every angle across the globe, we are lost for words. In this past week, we saw on both sides of the Atlantic common motorized vehicle and knives being used to crush, maim, kill and terrorize ordinary people. Week before on the African continent, Catholic worshipers were executed during Mass. It was last year a French priest was killed while saying early morning Mass. No faith has been left untouched, there has been fanatics who deface and destroy buildings of other faiths, suicide bombers have caused the death of hundreds in mosques and other symbols of faith everywhere. Those who bring suffering, their response often times have an underlying religious reason. Sometimes we forget to recognize the fear and suffering of others, outside of ourselves.... and never pause to ask why, why? The downturn of livelihood for people in Venezuela has caused no end to civil strife and hardship among their people, wars in Republic of Congo, Syria, Afghanistan; starvation in the African Sahal have brought suffering and death to millions of people.

Now hear we are on the 20th Sunday of Ordinal times, what is God saying to us through the Scriptures? The first reading is taken from the prophet Isaiah, who lived in troubled times in Israel. What are we to do?

“Thus says the LORD:

Observe what is right, do what is just,” (Is. 56:1)

Yes, in the face of all that we see around us, God is asking that we focus on what **We** have to do... being right and just. So there must be little regard for what others are doing.... we have to do the ‘*right thing*’. The confusion of the world will continue regardless, but there is a call that ‘the people of God’ remain focused... doing His Will. the next line explains the why...

“For my salvation is about to come.” (Is. 56:1)

When the hour of Christ second coming, we must not be caught 'napping'. World and local events demonstrate time and time again *we know not the hour or the time...* Think of the those enjoying the Spanish afternoon warmth, those struggling to eek a living in the desert displacement in South Sudan- each became victims of death. The millions who have been existed in marginality in their country, at their schools or place of work. God have to hold to a promise for them....

"My justice, is about to be revealed." (Is.56:1)

God is telling us that in the face of what we see around us, our eyes must be focused on doing what is right.

*"Happy is the one who does this,
whoever holds fast to it." (Is. 56:2)*

There will be no reason for you to be unhappy, sometimes people equate happiness with -life going your way.... No, it means that God is in charge of your life and there should be no needless worry and feelings of distressed.... **"He got this."** Yes, in the face of earthly insults, acts of bigotry, marginalization by inherited poverty... Let us not forget to give God His due- our gathering with people of faith-the church, and striving to do your best against the pain inflicted by others.

*"Keeping the Sabbath without profaning it,
keeping one's hand from doing any evil." (Is. 56:2)*

The Gospel points us to when we keep our side of the bargain, *we have a voice*. An immigrant woman from Canaan called out to Jesus, she was ignored....

"But he did not say a word in answer to her." (Mt. 15:23)

Her voice did not go away she persisted. Why?

"My daughter is tormented by a demon." (Mt. 15:22)

This mother had done all she could do to relieve her daughter's distress; Jesus was now her only hope. When the actions of our world face us, when personal struggles attempt to topple us we raise our voices, as Jesus is our only hope.

"Lord, help me." (Mt. 15:25)

Often there is where we hear God's voice.... Yes, the Canaanite woman was not on Jesus' *top pick list*, but her voice was not to be denied.

*He said in reply, "I was sent only to the
lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Mt. 15:24)*

Her immigration status did not silence her voice!!! She too needed Jesus's help, and she was willing to accept *'the remnant scraps'* left by Israeli nationals. *Jesus too, had a variety of immigrant issues to address.*

"Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps

that fall from the table of their masters.” (Mt. 15:27)

The Canaanite woman was not to be denied spiritual and physical healing, based on her nationality or immigration status....*Hmmmm*.... Yes, even in Jesus’ day immigrants worked the ‘*scrap*’ jobs pushed of the table of nationals. Jesus heard the voice of the powerless and marginalized groups in His society and He will hear yours. He was forced to acknowledge the voice of the immigrant; and provide for them equal benefits..... *Hmmm*....

“Then Jesus said to her in reply, “O woman, great is your faith!” (Mt. 15:28)

What are you doing on the national societal issues of marginalized native people, expressions of bigotry and intolerance towards immigrants, their food, their culture and their faith? Isaiah proclaimed that God said, be faithful to His demand, your voice will be heard for the need of others....
Now, where is your voice?

Let us pray against the hatred of groups and organizations which attempt to bring disharmony, fear and uncertainty to our society, those who suffer at the hands of violent and fanatic people. Pray for the victims of mudslides in Sierra Leone.

Faith in Laity Corner is a weekly review of Sunday’s readings written by
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