

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith In Laity Corner



26th Sunday Ordinary Times

Just Where Are They?

Reading: Ez. 18: 25-28; Mt. 21:28-32

If by chance with God's mercy I reach heaven, no doubt I will be surprised with the people seen there. At that time, of course, your all-knowing 'mind' will recall names of a number of 'good righteous' people, whom you were sure to see. '*Just where are they???*' Sensitive to the fact that heaven is a busy place; yet you were sure that certain well-known people would be there – but there are not. ***Just where are they?*** A question which leaves one pondering...*Hmmmm*. Throughout the His 3- year public ministry, Jesus deliberately repeated in the stories of the 'Widow's Mite', 'Lazarus' and 'The Rich Young Man'; the ultimate downfall of those who have wealth in money and spirit. The serious modern pursuit of wealth, security and spiritual fame appear to move in direct opposition to what is needed by those who are heaven bound.

The Bible abounds with stories of people who in our social or spiritual ranking were not 'worthy' of the goodness of God; but were granted His Grace and made it to heaven. We reflect on the 'good thief' on the side of Jesus who was granted heaven just before Jesus died. Then who is eligible for heaven? How do we get to heaven? What qualifies some of us, while others are condemned?

"You say, "The LORD's way is not fair!" (Ez. 18:25)

Our natural reaction will be that God has a strange sense of justice. Who could be right on this rounds? It has to be God, as He is the judge of His creation. We ask this often. How is it that the 'good' brother/sister/uncle/aunt dies and He spares the life of the one who cares about no one?

"Is it my way that is unfair?" (Ez. 18:25)

An interesting question, should God have taken the selfish brother/sister/aunt/ neighbor and allow the good one to remain?

Are not your ways unfair? (Ez. 18:25)

Would it be better if the selfish person has no chance to repent? Or is it merciful to allow him/her

time to repent from their 'wrong' ways.

“If the wicked turn from the wickedness they did and do what is right and just, they save their lives...” (Ez. 18:27)

We can conclude that God does not want creatures formed in His image and likeness to fail, each of us are being provided with every chance possible to repent and to return to Him. As long as we are alive, God gives us another chance. The door to return to Him is always wide open.

This week's Gospel reinforces this thought.

“A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’” (Mt. 21:28)

Everyone can think of a friend that is always courteous, kind and willing to agree to any request. Yet, we know well that their wonderful response, yields no results.

“He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went.” (Mt. 21:30)

On the other hand, there is one who avoid you and never openly agrees to assisting you; but will later feel sorry and quietly completes the task.

“He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went.” (Mt. 21:29)

The next time, do you appeal to the person who hands out *empty promises* or do you reach out to the person who eventually will *'come around'* and help out? Jesus was reminding us that vocal and helpful demeanor does not fool Him; He searches the heart. Did you ever had any intention of helping? Or did you lie, to create an impression among others? How often have church folks joined committees and their name is documented; but are never there to help or arrive when all the hard work has ended and leave before clean-up? *Hmmm...* How often have you headed committees where you had to ask complete strangers to help set-up and clean-up as all the *'good and holy'* folks have gone home. (*Ask me about that one!!!*) Well then, Jesus was absolutely *'on point'* when He said.

“Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.” (Mt. 21:31) .

Make sure you are a person of your word, without expectation of reward, be the one to listen to the Word, admit it into your heart, recognize your faults so that you can receive the Grace to make that radical change that will lead to eternal life. Maybe honest sinners like us, can hope to receive a heavenly reward some day!!

May we pray for those facing the task of restarting their lives.... Family and friends in Dominica, USVI, Cuba, Puerto Rico, St. Maartin, Florida, Texas and other places in the Caribbean and other parts of the world... May God give them His Grace as we continue to support them however we can.

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