

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C

Focus: What we plant grows for future generations

First Reading

DT 30:10-14

Psalm

PS 19:8, 9, 10, 11

Second Reading

COL 1:15-20

Gospel

LK 10:25-37

Good evening/morning again. My brothers and sisters, we have heard the message of this Gospel many times. We have heard many times over how Christ confronts the bigot, the chauvinist, the overly pious, the overly righteous, or the overly comfortable in their ways. In all cases, he acknowledges the question asked, as well as its intent. He then follows up with a great story of illustration that can lead to only one conclusion. This conclusion is nearly always opposite what the “law” or society has deemed to be the answer.

In today’s Gospel, Christ described several passers by and in each case, they had an obligation of faith to have compassion and to reach out and care for the bleeding, dying victim. And in each case, the passers by decided to not act according to the Love given them through the covenant but rely on human laws and boundaries. But it did not stop there. Christ went on to describe a person that the law demands no interaction, a person who had more right to ignore the victim because he was a Samaritan and

the victim was a Jew. Christ went on to describe how this person, took upon himself the life giving act of kindness and mercy for the simple sake of kindness and mercy to tend to the victim. But wait Christ did not stop there, if that were not enough. He goes on to describe the faith the Samaritan had on the inn's keeper to receive such a valuable down payment on the continued care of the victim and promised to repay him if more expenses were required upon his return. Ah his return. Who does the Samaritan now remind of us of? Christ, right?

From our second reading to the Colossians, we are reminded that Christ Jesus is the visible image of our invisible creator God.

From this Gospel we can see in the Good Samaritan the visible Christ in our midst. Now we all get this right? We know that we are to be the Good Samaritan, Christ, to everyone. We are told that love of God and Love of neighbor are the two greatest commandments.

But what often happens when we start to understand our neighbors. First, that some can be quite odd. Second we share

something in common, our neighbors. What happens next is where we again let ourselves down because we then start thinking in terms of neighborhoods. And what often can happen next? We begin to erect fences, gates, and even walls to keep the non-neighbors out. These fences, gates and walls can be physically real or figuratively real within our hearts.

The natural result of having these fences, gates and walls in place is the declaration of mistrust and isolation, which then leads to fear. What does fear often lead to? It often leads to humiliation, which then leads to anger, which leads to hate, and ultimately ending violence. Note that violence is always an end and nothing good can ever be made from it.

Sisters and brothers can we see how our society has erected fences and walls. Have we not witnessed, again and again the fear born from the separation that was artificially created. Can we not see how repeated humiliation and injustice has led to hate and anger? Just look to Dallas, Louisiana, Minnesota, or all across the world.

However, not all is lost. Hell has not come to the earth. Why? The answer comes first from our Hebrew scripture reading. In Deuteronomy we are helped to understanding that, while God did not create evil, God always enables good to rise from it. Further, in this reading from Deuteronomy we are helped to understand that observance of God's law is labor, a labor of love to one another. It is this love, which we know to be God residing in our hearts.

Why are we not lost, because of what we share at this table of the Lord. His most blessed body and blood. We partake of this Sacrament so that the invisible may become visible in us.

This is best summed up by a prayer written by Bishop Ken Untener in 1979 called the Romero Prayer.

"It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is

complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a

future not our own.”

We must come to know not only the seeds we are planting for future generations but also those seeds and plants we continue to feed and water today. Are plants of hope and love or fear, anger, or hate?