

## THE CROSS AS OUR ONLY BOAST!

Dear parish family,

The first reading portrays Jerusalem as a nursing mother, comforting and restoring the health of its citizens, leading to a rebirth where prosperity flows like the bountiful milk she provides. Where people see death and destruction, the Lord sees rebirth and rejoicing.

The cross manifests a similar contradiction. The cross was symbol of shame and death, yet through the death of Jesus has become the centerpiece of Christian glory. St Paul reflects on this paradox in his first Epistle to the Corinthian church, written merely 20 years after the crucifixion of Jesus ( 1Co 1:21-25)

*For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demands signs and Greeks desires wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

Today's second reading begins with a bold declaration from St Paul:

*"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

In a world that glorifies power, prestige, and personal achievement, Paul flips the script. The cross has become the means of our salvation. Paul rejects religious pride, especially the kind that boasts in external rituals. To boast in the cross is to embrace humility, to acknowledge that we are saved not by our works, but by the Christ's sacrifice. This is a radical reorientation of values. The world's priorities – status, wealth, self-glory- no longer hold sway. It's not a withdrawal from the world, but about living in it with a transformed heart.

The scripture readings for this Sunday remind us that we all share in the ministry and mission of Jesus. As we share our faith with others, we become missionary disciples of God's love for the world. We are called to be missionaries to everyone around us.

As members of God's family, we need one another and must work so that the Kingdom of God lives not only in our hearts but in our world.

As Jesus chooses the 72 disciples to go ahead of him in preparing the way of the Lord, we are also called to continue this world of witnessing and proclaiming God's love, healing and freedom to all whom we meet. Communicating the reality of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven is our mission objective as followers and disciples of Jesus. This is not an easy task for there will be rejection, hostility, and pain but also filled with joy and hope. God's comfort always leads us in this mission and we never travel alone for God is with us. "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."(Luke 10:1-12)

We are called to gather the people, the greatest and the least to hear God's word and to share at His table of welcome where we all come with our hopes and dreams that can make this world a better place for all people. As we celebrate the birthday of our nation, the lesson of working together and finding a place at the table for the greatest and least among us is made clearer.

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