

JULY 24, 2022: 17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Saint Teresa of Avila wrote some very poignant words in regard to our call to true discipleship.

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which He looks with
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which He looks with
Compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

The point she is making is that God has determined to have us participate in bringing his saving grace to the world. God could easily do it without us because God is God. However, God loves us so much that it is not enough that He alone saves us: He wants us to be part of the saving mission of Christ. Contemplating the words of Saint Teresa, it is clear that as Christ is the incarnation of God, we must be the incarnation of the saving mission of Christ.

God has given us the gifts of scripture, prayer, the sacraments, and the Church to help us understand exactly how to do that. Moreover, through the sacraments we are given the grace necessary to be the living embodiment of Christ for others. In baptism we have been imbued with the Holy Spirit. We are living temples of the Lord. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us opens us to be united with Christ in his mission to save the world. At our baptism, we experienced the death of Christ and rose with Him to new life. Our lives in that moment were changed forever, and our very souls were marked for Christ. As Christ is priest, prophet, and king, we also share in this tripartite mission: our lives must reflect Christ in all that we do.

How we do that is shown to us through the scriptures and teachings of the Church. As Saint Jerome tells us: ignorance of scriptures is ignorance of Christ. Many people disagree with the teachings of the Church without really having an understanding of the scriptures. If you truly study the teachings of the Church, you come to realize they begin and end with the scriptures. They are either directly related to what the scriptures teach, or they are the natural extension of the scriptures. As stated before, when it comes to faith and morals the scriptures cannot be wrong—they are the very word of God. How we ensure that we properly interpret them is where the Church comes in. The Holy Spirit ensures that the Church cannot enter into error where faith and morals are concerned. Therefore, with the scriptures and the teachings of the Church, we can come to know God, what He expects of us, and how we are to live out his expectations. The scriptures and the Church help us to have that real relationship with Christ that is truly necessary to become the embodiment of Christ in the world.

The incarnation of Christ therefore is not simply about Christ himself. Yes, his incarnation is unique because He has two natures, divine and human in the one person. When we speak of the incarnation in relationship to his disciples, it is in an analogous way. We only have one nature which is human, but we are also made in the image and likeness of God. Our very being is an expression of God.

Though we are not divine, our human nature impels us to be one with God. Why did God make you? God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven. This simple question and answer from the Baltimore Catechism gets right to the point of the purpose of our life: we must, therefore, seek to truly embody Christ in our lives. We must be his hands and feet. We must be his compassion,

mercy and love in the world. Others must come to see Christ in us. The incarnation of Christ reminds us that this is possible. If God could make Jesus human as He did, then He can give us what is necessary to bring Christ to others.

The incarnation teaches us about the extent to which God will go to save us. And, as such, teaches us what we must do to participate in, and live out, our salvation. Also, God has given us the tools necessary to make this happen: again—the scriptures, prayer, the sacraments, and the Church. We must simply pray each day, “Lord, allow me to be Christ to others, allow me to see Christ in others, and allow me to truly experience Christ in my interactions with others.” This is at the heart of true discipleship.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask me directly, or send your questions to me at fr.brian@theholyrood.org , or if easier please call me at 978-254-0560.

Please keep me in your prayers.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Fr. Brian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Fr. Brian