



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

November 13, 2022

Thirty -Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the gospel reading this weekend, Jesus very deliberately talks to his disciples about the darkness that will come their way. When they comment on the beautiful building that was the Temple in Jerusalem, he tells them bluntly that one day it will all be destroyed. The Temple was the symbol of God's presence for the Jews. Yet, Jesus could see it was doomed. The fall of the Temple would be only one element of a very dark scene that Jesus describes - a scene that includes natural disasters, terrible wars, and the persecution of his own followers. It would have been much easier for the disciples to have gone on admiring the beauty of the Temple than to have had to listen to such a dark prediction. Jesus, however, was alert to the darker side of life at that time, because he was on the point of having to face into his own very personal experience of darkness. The hour of his passion and death was approaching.

Jesus clearly wanted his disciple to have a faith that was strong enough to deal with the darkness of evil and suffering. He wants all of us to have a faith that endures. 'Your endurance will win you your lives', he says in that reading. An enduring faith is a faith that never loses hope in God's power to bring good out of evil, new life out of death. An enduring faith is ready to hope against hope. As Christians, our approach to life is shaped by the events of Holy Week. The evil and sin that was on the hill of Calvary was not the last word. God worked powerfully through that dark experience for the healing and the salvation of all, including the salvation of those who even brought about the death of Jesus. When the darkness of sin and evil seems to be at its most powerful, we are called to have a faith that endures.

Christ tells us that we don't need a whole lot of faith, just a small amount. It is the grace of God that will increase faith so we may endure the obstacles and challenges on our journey. Such endurance is not just the result of will power on our part. It is the Lord who keeps us faithful. In the gospel reading Jesus tells his disciples that he himself will give them the eloquence and the wisdom they need when their faith is tested. When our own faith is put to the test, we will not be standing alone. Our readings today can be really frightening as we look ahead to the end of life and end of the world the second coming of the Lord. We know and have experienced in our life time, the tumbling of governments, wars, insurrections, racial injustice and violence. We also believe as Jesus teaches us all will be vindicated on the day of the *Parousia*, evildoers will be punished and the faithful will not be harmed. We have confidence as Christians, as we look to our future with God our Father. The failure of the Christian is to succumb to a sense of hopelessness and helplessness in the face of darkness, and, as a result, to throw in the towel, to give up on the Lord's good work.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus himself was tempted to retreat before the darkness that awaited him. Yet, his prayer gave him the strength to keep going. Today more than ever, we who have been baptized into the Lord's body also need to stay the course. As today's gospel reading puts it, 'this is your opportunity to bear witness'. The Lord calls on us to keep faithful, bearing witness to him by what we say and do, in our homes, in our places of work, in our parish, in our society. We will need each other's example if we are to be faithful to this call of discipleship. The faithful endurance of any one of us is an inspiration to us all of us.