

Sixth Sunday Year B. 11th January 2024. Let no one be excluded from the one Family of Christ.

It is a well-known fact that human beings by nature want freedom: people want to express their opinions and decisions freely even at the expense of others' opinions. This is why some people choose to isolate themselves from others so that they may be free to make their own choices and decisions. It is not wrong to have the freedom to make decisions, but it is wrong to live an individualistic life. We all need each other to grow. The moment you refuse to associate with people, the beginning of your problem, frustration, and unhappy life.

In his earthly journey, Jesus was in union with His family and his native people and always identified with each community He visited. This is to show us the importance of being in a giving community.

Imagine the case of a leper in our first reading who wishes to be in union with his family and people but was denied of that opportunity for no fault of his, because of the situation he found himself. The Jewish law regards a leper as an outcast as we read in the first reading. He was excluded from his family and his people; not only that but he was mocked as he was forced to declare himself as "unclean". What a painful and frustrating experience! It would be better if the leper decided to isolate themselves from others, but it was the law that separated them from the living community. One may say that it was a Jewish culture of old, but it does not happen in today's world. You may be right to think that way. But many people and families are experiencing exclusion: among friends, siblings, the community, and from the dividend of democratic government, which is supposed to be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Paul in the second reading speaks of inclusion, to avoid giving offense to people and to seek not only our benefits but that of the many that they may be saved.

Jesus came to bring good tidings to the afflicted; to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberation to the captives and the outcasts. Isaiah 61:1. One of his first miracles was to cleanse a leper, which brought the leper back into the life of the community. Jesus calls that nobody should be kept out or excluded from the new family that he had begun. Let us look around and see, that many are still excluded from the family of Jesus, we should bring them to the fold let us not exclude most especially those who require our help. For the times that we are troubled and feel excluded let us like the psalmist always, turn to the Lord so that he will fill us with the joy of salvation, and like the leper let us come to Jesus with our sickness and say lord, if you will make me clean.

Peace

Fr. Jingbe Simon