

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I: Isaiah 49: 3, 5-6

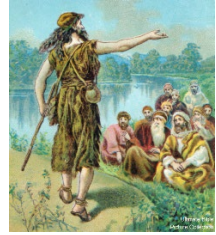
Responsorial Psalm: 40: 2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

Reading II: I Cor 1: 1-3

Gospel: John 1: 29-34

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/011523.cfm>



The Gospel passage today is from the Gospel according to St. John. John the Baptist was missioned to give witness to Jesus. Evangelist John connects the truths expressed in transcendent terms in the first part of the chapter with the real and living Jesus. "He existed before me" brings reality to verse one of the Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

The Evangelist identifies the Word as the only son of God. John testifies that Jesus is the Son of God.

Earlier, John the Baptist stated that he is not the Messiah (anointed one). In the Hebrew scriptures, the anointed one generally referred to the king. In some places, the prophets were referred to as anointed to bring God's message. In the passage for today, John testifies that he saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus, and it remained on him. Jesus is the anointed one. Finally, John proclaims that Jesus is the Lamb of God. There are two references to lamb in the Hebrew scriptures. The suffering servant in Isaiah 53 is compared to "a lamb led to the slaughter" (vs. 7). The lamb's life was surrendered for something greater. Jesus and his disciples are called to a life of service that will benefit others.

The second image of a lamb is in the Passover celebration. In the celebration led by Moses, the lamb was sacrificed, and its blood spread on the house door frame. It gave its life so that the people of Israel might live and have freedom. Jesus gives his life so that all the human family might be freed from death.

The Evangelist is proclaiming the truth of who Jesus is by using these titles. Jesus is the Eternal Word, the Son of God. He is the Messiah, the anointed of God. He is the savior for whom humanity has waited. These titles are significant and full of meaning. As one becomes a disciple of Jesus, the path to becoming more like Jesus is not just taking the title Christian but invites one to a radical life change and a mission. This mission is not something that leads to fame and fortune. It is a journey of service and giving life to others.

The first reading is taken from the second suffering servant song in Isaiah, chapter 49. The servant of God is called by God even in the womb. This is not a fixed predestination but a sense of God's desire to invite and prepare people all along a person's life to share in the mission of God. The servant is the one whom God desires to share in and work with to achieve God's plan and to show God's glory.

The passage also declares God's plan to include all people. Not only will the servant be part of the mission to the people of Israel, God's work will be even greater. This servant will be a light, a source of direction and truth, to the gentiles in the many other nations. Thus God's work of salvation will reach people throughout the world.

As Disciples, our mission is to be a light to others. To show the truth of God's message through how each person lives. By the quality of family life, professional life, and civic life, the values of the Gospel are manifest in deeds and attitudes. The mercy and compassion of God are experienced in acts of charity and expressions of kindness. God's love is made real and concrete in each of our lives.

The second reading is the beginning of the first letter to the Corinthians. In these early weeks of Ordinary Time, the second reading will be taken from this letter sequentially. Paul identifies himself and to whom he is writing in the conventional form of a letter. He identifies his role and authority as an apostle of Christ. He addresses them as the church of God in Corinth. There is one church of God, and it is spread through many locations. Like other church members in other places, they are called to be holy.

Holiness is being different from the ordinary. It manifests in a different way of life that flows from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This life will be the focus of what Paul wants to instruct them about in the following chapters.

He concludes his greeting with the Christian blessing of Grace and Peace. Grace is a sharing in the life of God. Peace (Shalom) was the standard Jewish greeting. It was not simply the absence of strife. It was a wish for wholeness, well-being, and a relationship with God and each other.

Key themes:

Christian Vocation

Discipleship

Public Witness

Anointed One

Names of Jesus

Reflection questions:

What are some of the titles that you use for Jesus? What do these say about Jesus and his mission?

In becoming a follower of Jesus, how is God calling you to share life and bring life to others?

How have your actions given witness to the Gospel?

What is your understanding of Church?

Prayer suggestions:

For the Church: that we may be a light to the nations and an instrument of God's saving message to all who are seeking direction and a deeper meaning for their life

For a greater awareness of God's call in our lives: that we may listen and live out the mission to which God invites us

For all disciples: that we may give testimony that will attract others to Jesus and help them encounter Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life for all the human family

For this Christian community: that we who are called to be holy may allow the grace of God to work in us and form us into the people of God

For catechists and parents: that like John the Baptist, they may introduce and lead the young people in their care to a deeper relationship with Jesus