

14th Ordinary Sunday
July 3, 2022
“Facing Hostility and Rejection”

Is 66:10-14
Gal 6:14-18
Lk 10:1...20

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

All of us have responsibilities. We all have a job or profession that requires responsible stewardship and hard work. Often, most people have several of these responsibilities. These can include: parents with children – teachers with students – medical professionals with patients – officers of the law with the public – and service personnel with customers.

Certainly, one of life’s greatest challenges is to remain faithful to our responsibilities as long as we have them. This challenge can include: disobedient children – undisciplined and lazy students – non-compliant patients – uncaring law-breakers – and unappreciative customers. All of these resistant people wear us down.

Consequently, some of us can experience burnout – Others, just put in minimal time and effort – and hope for an early retirement – Others, become jaded and hostile – These last, no longer care – They treat everyone as suspect and without compassion!

One of our responsibilities as Christians is to be witnesses for Jesus and to the message he brought. We can do this by being the best we can be in every situation and in every encounter. Furthermore, this witness should be a leitmotif – a background theme in our lives. It should be something that flavors everything we do!

The 72 disciples, whom Jesus sent on mission, were not Apostles. Yet, they were to go out and spread the message of Jesus. Jesus blessed them with extraordinary powers. But he also warned them: against seeking the best homes – the best hospitality and food – against enriching themselves for their service.

Jesus also alerted them to hostility and rejection. We can, likewise, experience this hostility and rejection in whatever vocation, job, profession, or service we provide.

Nevertheless, our gifts are never wasted. Love and peace never vanish into thin air – Because these are gifts of God. They will be returned to us no matter what hostility and rejection we face and endure!

Lest we become proud or self-congratulatory with our successes, St. Paul has words of wisdom. He reminds us that we must suffer – We will always suffer. There is no way to eternal life without experiencing something of the cross of Jesus Christ. Thus, Paul boasts of nothing, except what suffering has brought to him.

He also reminds us that religious rules, religious practice, religious observance – can mean nothing. They mean nothing without a real and personal relationship with Jesus and with God. In fact, even strict adherence to these things does not guarantee salvation. For salvation, faithfulness in the externals of religion must be combined with love in our hearts and souls – Because a loving faithfulness for Jesus and for God – is what will save us!

Furthermore, love and faithfulness in our personal relationship with Jesus and God completes us. It makes us whole. This is true no matter what the world or the culture thinks of us!

After the Chosen People returned to the Promised Land, they rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple. But it didn't take long before perfunctory ritual and superficial religiousness set in. They fought over the limited land that was available – They became materialistic and self-serving – They looked down upon outsiders and non-Semites – They kept the laws, the rituals, and the observances – But their hearts were far from God! They had no personal relationship with God – And they would, one day, reject God's Son when he finally came!

All this is the reason Isaiah wrote the last chapter of his book. It was to give hope to the few who remained faithful. Someday, there would be a new and perfect Jerusalem. Everyone would be happy – everyone would be blessed – every broken heart would be comforted and healed!

Of course, Isaiah was prophesying about the eternal Kingdom of Heaven! Jesus made this possible for everyone through his Gospel, his life, his death, and his Resurrection!

So, let us pray that God will remind us of all these wonderful things.
May God's grace be there – especially when we face routine, boredom, hostility,
and rejection in the many responsibilities we all continue to have!

Amen.

July 3, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra