

32<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Sunday  
November 10, 2019  
“Endurance Born of Faith”

2 Mac 7:1...14  
2 Thes 2:16 - 3:5  
Lk 20:27-38

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the temptations we all have to face is that of judging other people. For example, it's easy to judge the homeless. They are usually unwashed, unkempt, often alcohol or drug addicted, and always seem to be looking for a handout.

However, they were not born that way. They are human beings, just like we are. So, what happened to them? Why are they the way they are now?

We forget that many are veterans of Vietnam or Middle Eastern wars. They have seen, and maybe even perpetrated, some of the terrible horrors of war. Moreover, they will be forever damaged in this life from the experience. Other homeless have had on-going strings of bad luck – the loss of job and income, inability to pay the rent or keep a home, estrangement from family members – just to name a few!

Consequently, the question for us is: How would we cope if we had to face what they had to face? How would we survive? None of us can predict how we would cope – if we faced extreme hardship or loss; if the bottom fell out of our world; if war devastated our country; if a world-wide depression struck, or if there were chaos everywhere!

The scriptures for today teach us that endurance with faith is the only answer, when we have run out of options. However, this endurance must be that of the soul and spirit – of our inner life with God!

The Chosen People, in their tiny homeland, were under constant threat from the surrounding powers – much like Israel today. 175 years before Christ, pagan Greek power and influence dominated the region. Hebrews faithful to God and the Torah were persecuted and put to death because of their refusal to worship the gods of the pagan Greek culture. Unfortunately, torture was often used to force the faithful into betrayal of their beliefs.

Today's passage from the Second Book of Maccabees shows the steadfastness, faith, and endurance of a whole family. It, likewise, teaches some wonderful truths. It speaks of a marvelous resurrection in a world beyond the present. It speaks of everlasting life in the world to come. It also maintains that the cruel, the unjust, and the wicked will be excluded from that eternal blessing!

In the New Testament reading, St. Paul teaches the necessity of prayer that springs from faith, when we experience hardship. Nothing is possible without God's grace. God's power and love can enable us to endure whatever comes – even the most extreme hardship, suffering, or tragedy.

Unfortunately, our present culture and world are as perverse and wicked as was the world of St. Paul. Paul, himself, begs for prayers because he knows that he is beset with weakness and must persevere in faith and endure. However, he assures us that with God's grace, we can share in the endurance of Jesus, himself!

In the Gospel selection, Jesus is confronted by the Saducees who did not believe in any resurrection or on-going life after death. Furthermore, they assumed that the eternal life that Jesus taught must be just like the life we have here. Hence, the absurd question about marriage and progeny.

To the conundrum they posed, Jesus revealed that eternal life is much more than just a better version of our life here. It is something so wonderful, that our new life will be like that of the angels. Indeed, St. Paul would later write that: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it even entered into our minds what God has prepared for those who love Him!"

Brothers and Sisters, there is no way through this life without hardship. There is no way to our resurrection without our own suffering and death on our own Mt. Calvary. Jesus, himself, asked for the grace to face what he endured. And his endurance, born of faith, is the example for us to follow.

So, let us pray for all those who suffer hardship – Let us pray for the homeless, that they can find their way – And, let us pray for ourselves, that the "Lord may direct our hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Jesus Christ!"

Amen.

November 10, 2019

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