

## **6TH SUNDAY, ORD. (C) IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN**

At the time of Paul and the early believers, the resurrection of Christ was refuted or denied by some people. That led St. Paul to tell the Corinthians that the resurrection of Christ was the good news he had been preaching, and that without the passion, death and the resurrection of Christ, our faith is vain, and that Christians are the most pitiable people in the world.

In fact, the message of the passion, death, and resurrection was “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God,” 1Cor. 1:23-24). This is the truth our faith is based on as Christians. This also makes us believe that Christ has power over everything and we have to believe in Him.

If Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God, then we cannot leave Him behind and trust in human beings who are creatures of the living God. That is why in the first reading, Jeremiah was telling his people that “cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the Lord”. That person is like a barren bush in the desert. But the one who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted beside the waters.

This is echoed in the Psalm, that the man who avoids sin and the company of sinners, but delights in the law of the Lord is like a tree planted beside the flowing waters; the leaves are always green, and produces fruits all the time. The wicked on the other hand is like chaff which is easily blown away by the wind.

Looking around us today, with the advancement of science and technology, and the discovery and invention of many sophisticated gadgets, there is the big temptation to forget about the intervention of God in our daily lives. What can also make our faith diminish or weaken is the numerous disasters and evil deeds we experience day in and day out. The question many people ask is, “where is God, that all these things are happening”? But it is highly possible that all these things are happening because we have forgotten about God and trusted in our own successes. We have failed to acknowledge the grace of God in all that we do. We have given the devil a foothold in our lives, like in the case of Adam and Eve, filling us with pride. The power of the resurrection is ignored.

But Jesus in the sermon on the plain (or level ground) warns us that a time will come when those who weep will rejoice and those who trust in the work of their hands leaving their faith in God behind will weep. Mary also said: The Lord “has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted the lowly; He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty,” (Lk. 1:52-53).

Our gathering here today, and every day, may indicate that we have faith in the resurrection of Christ and in His saving power. Does this faith help us hunger and thirst for righteousness, and rely on Him? Do we trust more in what human beings can do for us and thus forget about the Creator of all things? Are we convinced that we are worshipping a living and faithful God? Where are the inventors? Where are the world’s great men and women whose names have been on front pages and headlines? We are human and we wither like the grass, but we trust more in our self-sufficiency more than the God who is eternal.

If there is no God, and Jesus is not God and has not risen, then we are the most pitiable people, as St. Paul is saying in the second reading. In that case, there is no need for us to worry ourselves to fast and pray, read the Bible, go to Church. There is no need to think about heaven or hell. Eat and drink for tomorrow you die.

But we have a multitude of witnesses of the existence of God and what He does in the lives of those who believe in Him. Hebrews has this to say: “Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for God has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you’. Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,” (Heb.13:5-7). “Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry but He thwarts the craving of the wicked,” Prov.10:2-3).