

4th Ordinary Sunday
February 3, 2019
“Our Identity in God”

Jer 1:4...19

1Cor 12:31-13:13

Lk 4:21-30

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the challenges that we all face as we live our lives is who we are supposed to be, and what must be the focus of our life's work. Personal identity is something that most people struggle to discover. And those who have discovered theirs, are usually comfortable with themselves – and a real pleasure to be around! The way that teens and young adults experiment with hair, clothes styles, entertainment – is part of their search for personal identity.

One way to discover what our life project should be is to assess our natural gifts and talents. Another is to look at things that truly interest us. Then we must determine whether or not we have the talents and the abilities to pursue them.

Of course, the foolproof way to discover who we are and our role in the world is to open ourselves to what God wants and to what God created us to do and become. Fortunately, the scriptures for today provide us with insight and direction regarding our personal life project.

Jeremiah was created by God and called to be a prophet during terrible times. The Chosen People had forsaken the Lord and were on a path to destruction. Jeremiah was the one called to warn them, challenge them, and then refuse to back down. This was despite the resistance he met – including attempts on his life!

Like Jeremiah, God knows each of us because He formed us in our mother's womb. We were each dedicated and appointed to some role in our society, in our culture, and in our world. It might not be grand or spectacular, but how we live our life will make a difference for good or ill for all those around us!

Moreover, as long as we are faithful and do our best – God will always be there for us with His marvelous providence and love. God is truly the master of everyone's life, whether they know it or not – and only the fool tries to be his or her own master!

In the second reading, many of the Corinthian Christians were trying to be more or different than who and what God had called them to be. There were many wonderful gifts in the early Church. Unfortunately, the Corinthian disciples were vying for the prestige they believed these gifts brought – gifts which God never intended for those who did not possess them. Sadly, too, their egos got in the way for many of them. The result was that they became jealous and resentful of others who did possess gifts that they did not themselves!

Consequently, Paul tells them that the most important gift of all – a gift they could all possess – was the gift of love. Love is the very divine life of God. Love is God's wonderful gift to everyone. If we accept this love and have love for God and for all His creatures, we will be all that He calls us to be. Moreover, no matter what special gifts and talents we have – if we are bereft of love, we are nothing at all!

In the Gospel, Jesus is being all that the Father has sent him to do and become. Unfortunately, his hometown folks could not understand or accept that God had so blessed one of their own. They had no faith. They were not open to God. They wanted to be entertained by the signs and miracles of Jesus! However, Jesus did not come to entertain. Like Jeremiah, Jesus was not welcome in his native place. Nor would the townsfolk look into themselves, examine their motives, and change their hearts and lives! In fact, Jesus was such an imagined threat that they actually tried to kill him!

Brothers and Sisters, how do we deal with the gifts of others? How do we accept and profit from those whom God sends into our lives? How do we respond to the challenges sent by God through others? God has a plan for all those He has created – not just for ourselves. Are we comfortable with who others are by God's design? Are we at peace with who we are and the plan of God for us as it unfolds in our lives over the years?

Hopefully, we can be honest with ourselves – and always face the truth about ourselves. Hopefully, too, we can examine our motives for everything we do and become all that God has created and destined us to be!

Let us pray, today, that we can do so. And may we always accept the special people whom God sends into our lives!

Amen.

February 3, 2019

Msgr. Russell G. Terra

