

8TH SUNDAY – ORD. TIME (C)

THE MORTAL WILL CLOTHE ITSELF WITH IMMORTALITY

February 26/27/ 2022

St. Paul reminds us today that a time will come when our mortal bodies will take on immortality, and the perishable will take on imperishability. This is the everlasting victory Jesus Christ has won for us. He has destroyed death forever, and thus, death has lost its sting, that is, it has lost its power to destroy the human soul.

How can the perishable put on imperishability? One has to “be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord. This can be done when one is able to know who he is. Knowing oneself in relation to God will help him in his life to be able to attain immortality.

The first reading makes it clear that what one says reflects what is in the mind and heart, so to say something that is good and edifying, one has to form the mind well. He should feed the mind and the heart with good ideas and intentions. This is echoed in the gospel; “A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks”.

St. James talks about good speech, and the damage the tongue can cause: “Nobody who fails to keep a tight rein on the tongue can claim to be religious; this is mere self-deception; that person’s religion is worthless” (Jam.1:26). “Someone who does not trip in speech has reached perfection and is able to keep the whole body in a tight rein...nobody can tame the tongue – it is a pest that will not keep still, full of deadly poison. We use it to bless God, but we also use it to curse people who are made in God’s image” (Jam.3:2-10). What comes out of my mouth?

How can I share in the victory over death? Do I know myself or do I know others more than myself? What do I feed my mind with, and what do I store in my heart? It is very easy to know many things about somebody than to know ourselves. We can write pages of the faults of others, but one sentence about our own faults. This is what Jesus is reminding us about in today’s gospel, that we should know that the weaknesses and faults we carry may be heavier than the other person’s faults we talk about.

To be clothed with immortality and to experience the victory won by Christ, my way of life should reflect the faith I profess. This is because “every tree is known by its own fruit”, as Jesus is saying today. Jesus told His disciples: “Beware of false prophets who come to you disguised as sheep, but underneath are ravenous wolves. You will be able to tell them by their fruits” (Mt.7:15-16a).

We may profess faith in God, but our actions may be totally different from what we say. This can be seen in the way some of us clergy and religious, some politicians, and professionals of different fields, who call themselves Christians behave. We trumpet our membership as Christians, but when it comes to real Christian life it is a totally different thing. Our way of life is full of deceit. Can this win for me immortal life?

When I look into a mirror, who do I see? Nobody other than myself. Is what I see outwardly the same as what is inside me? Does what I say reflect exactly who I am? Jesus is our teacher, and whatever He said went with what He did. Even His enemies knew that He was honest. When some Pharisees and Herodians wanted to trap Him about taxes, this is how they addressed Him: “Master, we know that you are an honest man, that you are not afraid of anyone, because human rank means nothing to you, and that you teach the way of God with all honesty” (Mk12:13-14a). Are we honest followers of His? Does what come from our hearts through the lips give testimony to our lives as Christians fully devoted to the work of the Lord? What am I doing to preserve my soul from eternal corruption?