

HOMILY - 13TH Sunday Ordinary Time, Year A - June 28, 2020

Our Second Reading today is one of many passages in Romans that are offered for funerals. It centers on the saving Event for us that Christ undertook. He died and Rose. That makes all the difference.

In Baptism, we have died and Risen in Christ. We pick up our cross and carry it daily. He is good to His word. We will rise with Him.

Our lives have been radically turned toward Jesus.

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Radically turned toward Jesus; this sums up the Gospel. We have been oriented toward God in Christ. But we are given the choice to remain in Him every day. So the gospel call is for us every day to be **radically turning to Jesus**.

We hear that in the beginning of our gospel passage today. As much as we have heard it over the years and decades – the words still wake us up like a glass of cold water splashing on us.

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me...”

These words are all the more powerful when we realize how strong the bond is within the Hebrew people, formed in the commandments of God for respect and love within the household.

Our Lord’s words are so powerful that those who attack Christianity use this line to quickly dismiss Catholic sexual ethics and family values as proving it is coming from a self-centered God.

Of course such a comment takes Christ’s words out of context. As many Christian Apologists have said to such claims by atheists, “the God you don’t believe in, is the God we do not believe in either.” Our God is the God who is existence and love itself. If anyone knows us and what makes us happy – it is God. Therefore it is vital for us to be in right relationship to God, who can guide us in love.

As Christ teaches in the Sermon on the Mount, “But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.” [Matt 6:33]

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In the bible we read the words, "...God is love." [1 John 4:8]

There is a question worth asking. If God is love, does that mean love is God?

The answer is, of course – No. Love is of God. Love is from God. Love is a quality of God. Love is what God does.

But the three word phrase "love is God" is dangerous. Love can be interpreted as a feeling. And that feeling of love has caused many people to kill or to steal or to do other terrible things in the name of Love. The feeling of Love demands attention from us that rivals the attention we owe to God alone.

The feeling of love needs to be informed by a relationship with God who is Love. When we prioritize God first, Love comes into focus.

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And so **we radically turn to Christ**, who is The Eternal Word Made Flesh, the Second Person of the Trinity.

It is then that we see what he means that, "...whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple— amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."

And of course, He gives so many other teachings that speak of not just helping the disciple who is a little one, but helping all the little and powerless. In other words, teachings for us to learn from Him – and love others. Those teachings are from He Who Is Love.

Yes, we need to take up our cross – Yes, there is a cross. And yes, there is a reward. Let us love as we have been loved. Let us live as ones who daily and hourly **radically turn to Christ**. Who has radically come to us. And is our reward.

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