

Homily for VII (7) Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C 20-02-2022 by Fr. Lubem Robert Waya, osj.

First Reading: 1 Samuel 26:2.7-9.12-13.22-23

Psalm: Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

WHAT ARE YOU MADE OF?

Martin Luther King Jnr once said, the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. This is what shows what he is made of, and this is no less true because the anxiety generated by life's troubles reveals our true identity in the face of provocation. Against this backdrop, we see David in our first reading confronted with a dilemma when King Saul who sought to take his life is sooner than later found to be at his mercy. But rather than take Saul's life, David declines from harming the Lord's anointed and left vengeance for God because human vengeance destroys societies. This reveals the kind of heart David has and the stuff He is made of. Little wonder then that He is described as a man after God's own heart (Cf 1 Sam. 13:14), and he later succeeds King Saul his archenemy. What would you do if you were David? What we do in the face of evil and unprovoked hostility shows whether or not we are of God. David shows us that evil can only be overcome with good rather than vengeance, and Christ too enjoins us in the gospel to do the same.

Even though it is always quite easy and normal to love those who love us, this is only human. Hence, Jesus today wants us to transcend this ordinary standard and look to the values of our true home which is heaven. Such an orientation reminds us of our obligation to constantly respond to the needy with good, even if they are hostile and opposed to us. This is what makes Christianity unique and distinct from other religions. That, undeserving as we are, 'God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).' Therefore, this gratuitous example of God makes it incumbent on us also to extend the effects of God's grace to others around us by treating people not as they deserve but as God has treated us with loving-kindness, mercy and forgiveness. That is why He gives us a new measure today in the new commands. Using these we can evaluate our Christian witness by asking ourselves some hard questions that require honest answers thus; How do we respond to those who treat us poorly, those who oppose us, who hate us and who challenge our way of life and curse us? Do they consider themselves our enemies or do we consider them as such? How do we treat them?

In the face of such provocations Jesus enjoins us to turn the other cheek - "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Humanly these commands seem unwise in the face of the given circumstances. However, they summarise the concrete practice of the great command of love, which forms the basis for a true Christian discipleship. He who wishes to be a true disciple of Christ must love and act in this manner. Acting in this manner removes us from the earthly domain of the old Adam who is the head of fallen humanity and puts us in the heavenly domain of the new Adam who is Christ and head of the risen humanity that has attained victory over sin and death. In Christ then what was weak becomes strong with God's strength and the corruptible becomes incorruptible at the resurrection when we are infused with the immortal spirit of God. Why not become a true disciple of Christ today then? May the Lord give us the grace to treat others just as He treats us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen