

Missionary Commentary

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 3, 2024

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 6:2-6
Psalm 18: 2-3, 3-4, 47, 51
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark: 12:28b-34

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Love is Manifested in Life-giving Relationships

The last time I wrote for Go Forth the main theme was God's love and mercy. It seems that we cannot escape this exhortation from our God! All of life, all meaning in life, all the strength that life produces is because of love, of God's love to be exact. There are many proofs of God's love for us that surround us. Would you agree that each one of us could easily come up with a list of 20 things that we experience because of God's love? I know that I could, but I also know that there are many, many people who do not share this experience.

During my many years in Brazil, I always marveled at the faith filled people with whom I journeyed in the base Christian communities. There were so many mothers who had experiences of losing young children because there was no transportation to get to the large city to see a doctor; adolescent boys who struggled with their sexual identity because their fathers were molesting children; parents who lost their adult daughter because of domestic violence; husbands and fathers who contracted cancer because of asbestos in the factories. My list goes on as I'm sure yours does, too.

Yet, the prophet exhorts us to choose life, to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus repeats these same words in today's Gospel and to love our neighbor as ourselves. How can we, Lord, when so many horrible things happen to our friends, family and us? The Brazilian people demonstrated to me a faith that was way beyond mine. Nothing as tragic as these examples I cited (and they are true ones from my life in Brazil), has ever happened to me or to my family.

After years of standing near these people, shedding my tears with them, helping to ease their cross by carrying a part of theirs, I can see that they live the Scriptures daily. When one loves with all her soul, the soul deepens its roots in the essence of being. When one loves with all his mind, the mind embraces the meaning of life despite tragedy. When one loves with all her strength, then strength becomes a solid pillar that can remain standing regardless of the winds that seek to destroy. And when we love with all our hearts, somehow God's face appears in all circumstances. Jesus had given his all for us and we strive to do the same. We truly are a Resurrection people.

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Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Deuteronomy 6:2-6 — In this short passage from Deuteronomy there are so many phrases that can be used for weeks of meditation and reflection. “Fear the Lord”, “...thus have long life,” “...you shall love the Lord, your God...” The prophet spells out exactly what is ours to do if we desire a long life. Most people do desire a long life, but can we actual do what is necessary? St. Augustine once wrote, “Love God and do what you want.” The measure of our love will be the measure of the quality of our loving.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 18: 2-3, 3-4, 47, 51 — The psalmist has experienced the God of wholeness and balance. God is indeed our strength and rock. However God is also kind to those who have placed God in the enter of their lives. The anointed one has been called and perceives how much one needs the rock, the deliverer, the refuge and the kindness of the Divine.

Second Reading

Hebrews 7: 23-28 — An important aspect of our Catholic theology is that Jesus does not need to repeat the sacrifice that was offered to the Father. It was done once for all time. And yet we come together daily or at least weekly to participate in this sacrifice through the Word and the Eucharistic Bread. Jesus is indeed our life and our nourishment on life’s journey.

Gospel

Mark 2:10-16 — Although Jesus speaks specifically of the husband and wife relationship and calls them to be faithful and loving, his embracing of the children is significant in the realm of relationships. We are all called to be trusting, interdependent on each other because it is love that binds us together.

Notes and commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, osf, a [Franciscan Sister of the Sacred Heart](#) who holds a Master’s degree in Formative Spirituality and served in the Amazon area of Brazil for 32 years. Currently she is the lay administrator of Sacred Heart Mission in Pembroke Township, Illinois.

Connections

This is the last Sunday before our Nov. 4th presidential elections. Most of us know of the importance of voting and as Pope Francis has said, voting is a responsibility of all citizens and we should vote according to our conscience. Please encourage your family and friends to do just that.

Please pray for the missions.
May God bless you in all the ways you Go Forth...



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