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A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

CALL WAITING

SUNDAY READINGS:

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
1 Corinthians 1:1-3
John 1:29-34

COMMENTARY

One winter in the city of Juarez, Mexico, so many people camped out in the parks near one of the bridges leading into El Paso, Texas that volunteers from the U.S. began to go over and visit them.

These volunteers felt called to come every day for weeks and months at a time, and helped organize schooling experiences for the children during the day, to keep them busy, and to teach them English. We managed to gather donations of food and used clothing for them, as well.

I found it touching, as I sat down and translated for the visitors, to discover how many of the migrating people prayed constantly to God, Mary and the saints during their treks, in the midst of dangerous conditions and over long periods of walking.

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They told us that it was the only thing that kept them going, and felt so grateful to God for the love shown to them. We who are called by God to receive them discover a rich resource of active, deep faith that benefits our entire host community!

Just as Israel was called to bring their light to the nations, and Paul was called to be an apostle, helping the Christian community in Corinth to answer their own call from God to live the teachings of Jesus, so John the Baptist was also called to remind us that Jesus is our Lamb of God, and Son of God, both victim and savior, who calls each of us to a certain way of life that is now open to us.

What is our answer to the call God makes to us, now, a call to lay down our lives for the poor and vulnerable, and live in Christ as adopted members of God's family, close to God and partners with God's work in the world today?



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NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

First Reading - Isaiah 49:3, 5-6: After Israel suffered military defeat at the hands of Babylon and went into exile, the prophet of this period is called to announce that Israel will return to the Promised Land, and all nations will thereby be saved.

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10: A thanksgiving hymn of an individual, who recognizes that ritual sacrifices are far inferior to a personal attitude of obedience to God's call.

Second Reading - I Corinthians 1:1-3: Paul begins his letter to the Christian community in Corinth by reminding them of their call to be holy, just as Paul identifies himself as called to be an apostle.

Gospel - John 1:29-34: John the Baptist plays a very important role as a witness to Jesus, called to employ two important titles of his: Lamb of God (see Isaiah 53:7), and Son of God (as God Himself acknowledged at the Baptism of Jesus, which we celebrated last week). In the face of a growing Christian Nationalism and other distortions about Jesus today, what kind of witness are we called to make about the identity of Jesus?

Notes and Commentary by Fr. Bob Mosher, a member of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban.

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