

Sermon for Sunday, Week 30 of Ordinary Time, Year B

2021

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

First. Preaching and understanding.

This Sunday is **World Mission Sunday**.

The world is also preparing for the important “**Conference Of Parties 26**” climate summit, which begins in a week’s time in Glasgow.

The concurrence of these two events invites us to think about how the message of the Good News about Jesus Christ, care for our common home, and social justice – especially in favour of the poor – are related.

We’ve just heard the heart-warming account of the healing of Bartimaeus.

He receives his sight – he is **enlightened** by Christ.

And, as the passage makes clear, this enlightenment is linked to **faith**.

Enlightenment or new understanding is something that we are all sometimes in need of.

Catholic Christians often pray to God, asking that, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, “we may have a right understanding in all things”.

Now, **it is the preaching of God’s word that makes available the gift of faith, and opens up the way to true understanding.**

So let us support the missionary activity of the Church with our prayers and offerings.

Second. Faith and love.

It wouldn’t be inappropriate to pray that the world leaders who will soon gather together to discuss a common response to the challenge of climate change might receive the gift of understanding, so that they might know how best to protect our common home.

But knowing what to do is not yet enough.

We also need the energy or strength that comes from **brotherly love**, from **true charity**.

Speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord, in our first reading, says,

**“I will bring them back
from the land of the North
and gather them from the far ends of earth;
all of them: the blind and the lame” ...**

The North refers to the lands of Assyria and Babylonia, the places to which Israel’s exiles [, 5 or 6 centuries before Christ,] had been deported.

But we can interpret this symbolically in a moral way too.

Just as the North is cold and icy,

so too, **when a person is held captive by the devil and doesn’t know God or seek Him, their minds and hearts are cold because they are without the warmth of holy love.**

But **when God touches these persons** and they begin to perceive how delightful He is and how good and pleasant is His friendship and company, they are drawn out of the North and journey together to a fair country where they rejoice in their **new-found freedom and potential**.

God's grace makes it possible for us to love like Christ.

It opens up the way to true justice by enabling us to **overcome selfishness**.

A global sense of fraternity and true brotherly love are extremely important if we are to successfully face the challenges of climate change because it is clear that to avoid disaster some sacrifices will need to be made.

Third. Justice for the poor.

The divide that separates rich nations from poor ones is a **grave scandal**, and something that greatly saddens the Holy Spirit.

Its causes are complex, but what is certain is that we cannot continue to tolerate societies that effectively exploit the world's poor so that those who have resources can continue to live in luxury.

In truth, **real riches consists in works of holy love**.

Our Lord suggested as much when He said, "Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys" (Lk 12:33).

So let us turn to God with all our hearts and ask Him to enlighten and guide us. Let us ask Him to help us understand more and more the pattern of life He wishes us to lead.

And let us pray earnestly that next week's important summit might bring all the fruit that God desires.

Praised be Jesus and Mary!

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