

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, the second reading today, which is from St. Paul, is, I think some of the most moving and beautiful of all the Epistles, and certainly of all that he wrote. St. Paul is teaching us that no power in the entire universe is able to separate us from the reality of Christ's love. Even though Jesus knows all of our sins and all of our faults, nonetheless, He remains faithfully in love with us. However, St. Paul goes beyond just describing Christ's love and fidelity to us. He tells us that war, starvation, injustice, death, poverty, fear, depression, and any other horrible reality we can think of that constantly swarm around us in this fallen world, cannot overcome the love of Christ for us.

As in the Gospel we just heard, Jesus looks at the human condition, tired, overwhelmed and seeking respite, and has infinite compassion for us. Jesus does not just feel pity for us and our condition, He heals us, and then feeds us with the Bread of Life; and even more, He asks us to participate in His loving mercy for us, by giving Him the little that we have, wherein He turns it into a superabundance for others! Thus, Jesus uses our weakness and fragility as the very weapon that undoes the plans of the evil one, both in our lives and in the world!

St. Paul, reflecting upon this infinite mercy of God as opposed to the mystery of evil in the world and in our lives, does not raise a fist to heaven and blame God, shouting out: "Lord, why have you let these things happen!"; rather, he reminds us, that even though we may suffer greatly in this world, nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the Love of Christ! What matters infinitely more than the evil and suffering we must endure in this life, is the reality of God's infinite love made visible for us in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, which we are now celebrating in this Holy Eucharist!

The evil one, the devil and its demons want to use evil and suffering to drag us down into its own despair of hopelessness, self-centeredness and hard-heartedness; but the Christian, alive in Christ through the Sacraments, especially Confession and Eucharist, prayer, especially the daily rosary, and a life centered in the Gospels, will always thwart the devil's plans. Suffering in this life is only temporary, and so is sin, only temporary, but the glory to be revealed in us in

Christ is everlasting. For those who believe, for those who are in Christ and with Christ and for Christ, we are already living in Easter, we do not wither into despair, revenge, corruption, but grow in love, perseverance and hope, following Christ out of the tomb, into His Easter Glory! In Him, whatever tragedy we may face, whatever sinfulness we may struggle with in sorrow and repentance, in all these things, we have already conquered overwhelmingly through Him who has loves us!