

Trinity XIII

August 25, 2024

Galatians 3: 16-22 & Luke 10: 25-37

We approach God's word each day expecting that that word would enlighten our minds, guide our hearts, renew our spirits, lift us up from all that weighs us down. God's word never fails to do that and so much more.

But even as we read and reflect on scriptures, we may or may not feel God's presence in the midst of the many challenges and responsibilities of life. This is the human condition in which we find ourselves: the realities of the world with many divisions and hatred. And the temptation to doubt God's word, dismiss what comes from God, and even ignore it completely is quite easy.

We live in a world of eclipse, in a world consumed by the darkness of sin and death. Our culture has become a culture of death. It's now in full display on the national or world stage.

One image that struck me this week, and I am having a tough time erasing that from my mind, is what took place in Chicago at the Democratic National Convention. On one hand, they were celebrating "joy," and everybody was happy and dancing inside of the convention center. On the other hand, Planned Parenthood has parked its mobile "health" clinic just outside of the same venue. And its representatives are roaming the surrounding roads offering free abortion. Think about it: while we are celebrating what we call joy, human life is being destroyed. What a dark world we live in!

We need God's light in our world now more than ever. One of the greatest weapons in our spiritual arsenal in this battle against the seed of Satan is total consecration to our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be aware of this simple fact: life is a sacred gift from God. That's what motivated the Good Samaritan in our today's gospel.

If I was a real human being, I would say that he learned this lesson from Jeremiah, who, by the inspiration of God, quotes God, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart." (Jeremiah 1:5a) And the Psalmist says, "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." (Psalm 139: 13-16)

God graciously creates, sustains, and cares for life at every stage, from the womb to the grave.

Here are some of the lessons that Jesus is teaching us through the story of the Good Samaritan

1. The Samaritan not only cares for the physical wounds, but the deeper wounds to the sense of self. Without even saying a word, he says to the victim, 'you do have value, and you are worthy of care.' Life is a sacred gift from God, and it deserves care and unwavering attention.
2. We are not so busy that we should ignore the pain and the suffering of those around us. Jesus presents the man in our story as "a certain Samaritan, **as he journeyed...**" To me, it means that this man has his own agenda, his plan for the day. But he puts everything on hold, and cares for the man left halfdead. That's what Christianity is all about: laying down our lives so that others may live. As Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 13).
3. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that our society, our communities, and relationships are not permanently broken. We can restore them. And it can all begin with reaching out to others whoever they are, whatever state they are in. We can decide that we will not let anyone, or any circumstance, diminish our humanity or the humanity of another person.

Let us prepare ourselves now for the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, where Jesus continues that work of pouring oil and wine on our wounds, restoring our souls, that we might, Go and do likewise.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, like the Samaritan, we want to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and identify with our Savior. Help us not to live for ourselves but rather to live for You. Help us lose our lives for Your sake, knowing that this world holds nothing of value... but that to follow You will result in the greatest reward.