

HOMILY for 2nd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year A

Panting & perspiring, two men on a tandem bicycle at last got to the top of a steep hill. “That was a stiff climb,” said the first man.

“It certainly was,” replied the second man. “And if I hadn’t kept the brake on, we would have slid down backward!”

Anyway, we Christians are called to follow Jesus faithfully even if we have to climb up a steep hill like that. But, we often do not realize that we are also asked to witness Jesus & point Him out to the world. Without our daily witness, a lot of people would not know about Jesus & His Kingdom of Heaven. That would be sad & disappointing for our Lord. So, what must we do to witness Jesus to the world? How could we let others know all the blessings that Jesus would bring them every day?

In case we do not know that our Lord desires all of us to witness Him to the world, this Sunday’s First Reading has this message for us, “...The Lord has spoken who formed me as His servant from the womb... I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to ends of the earth.” As you can see, we are called to be a light to the nations so that our Lord’s salvation would reach to the ends of the world. So, what does it mean for us to be a light to the nations? To help us answer that question, we could look back on what Jesus did as He tried to be a light to the nations & the source of salvation to the world. He did it by feeding the hungry, healing the suffering, & preaching His Good News to the hopeless. He fed several hungry crowds with meager resources available & refused to turn them away to fend for themselves. He healed all kinds of suffering people: the blind, the deaf, the mute, the crippled, the possessed, the leper, the sick, the dying, & the afflicted with rare diseases. Religious leaders demanded Jesus to hold off His healing on the Jewish Sabbath Days & make the suffering endure much longer. But, Jesus often had much compassion for all the suffering & would not make them endure one minute longer. That is why Jesus usually healed anyone who came to Him for help immediately. But, the best thing that Jesus did during His years of public ministry was to bring His Good News, particularly the Beatitudes, to the outcast & the hopeless. He told the poor & the social outcast that the Lord would not abandon them. He promised them that the Lord is on their side & the Kingdom of God is theirs. That is how Jesus brought the light to the nations & became the source of salvation to the world.

Unfortunately, we do not see many Christians these days imitate Jesus & try to do all the work that I just shared with you. They might say a few prayers when they have time or talk about Jesus to others when it is convenient for them. Otherwise, they often do not want to witness Jesus to the world or try to feed the hungry, heal the suffering, & preach His Good News to the hopeless. We have seen how some Christians even support our government on cutting food programs that feed the hungry such as USAID & SNAP food benefits. We have witnessed some Christians let our government reduce funding to mental health programs & institutions. We have observed many Christians would rather make criticism on various issues than trying to bring the Good News of Jesus to the hopeless & the broken around them. That is why we have seen a lot of unchristian speeches & actions around us every day even though some Christians claim that America is a Christian nation. Certainly we all know that actions speak louder than words. Everyone can claim to be a Christian; but it takes actions & commitment to live up to that name. That is why only saints could live up to that high standard

& fulfill it without any hesitation. We could follow their example & try to act like a Christian & speak the language of compassion & kindness to the world around us.

In case we could not live up to the high standard of Jesus and the saints yet, this Sunday's Gospel calls us to follow the example of St. John the Baptist & do this: "When John caught sight of Jesus coming toward him, he exclaimed: 'Look, there is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! It is He of whom I said: 'After me is to come a man who ranks ahead of me, because He was before me.'" ...Now I have seen for myself & have testified, 'This is God's chosen one.'" John the Baptist might not go around the world to preach the Good News of Jesus & feed the hungry & heal the hungry like St Paul & other missionaries might have done. But, John the Baptist was able to point out Jesus to everyone around him. He was able to witness Jesus in that simple way. Because of John's courageous witness, many of his disciples switched to Jesus' side & followed Him. We might not be able to do all the work of a missionary. But, if we could find the opportunity to point out Jesus to the world, that simple act of witness would help bring one person at the time closer to Jesus & welcome Him as a great source of blessings into one's life. You could do the math & see how many people would be able to get to know Jesus if every Christian would point one person to our Lord.

My dear brothers & sisters, what must we do to witness Jesus to the world? How could we let others know all the blessings that Jesus would bring them? That is our mission & calling as a Christian/Catholic. We cannot call ourselves a Christian/Catholic without doing anything to witness Jesus to the world. Otherwise, more & more people would not know Jesus; & the world would gradually turn away from His Kingdom. None of us here would want that to happen. So, it is all up to us to witness Jesus to the people around us & help share His Good News with the world every day.