

**Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time A - "Show me my hearts desire, O Lord, for I am wounded by your love."**

August 30, 2020.

Boy, Peter sure was told off in this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 16:21-27). "**Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.**" It didn't take Peter long to fall off the pedestal Jesus just put him on. Last Sunday, Jesus called Peter, "Blessed" and told him that he was the rock upon which His Church is built. Now Jesus calls Peter Satan. How did Peter fall so quickly? It's because **he was thinking the way of the world: "Save your life. Don't let anyone kill you."** instead of the way of the Lord: "**Make the sacrificial love of God real. Sacrifice yourself for others.**"

*"I didn't know Christianity would be this difficult. Sacrifice myself for others? Must be kidding!"* "Wait, you mean that commitment to Christ demands that I stay sober? Everyone I know gets drunk on Friday nights," It is easy for us to think the way the world thinks. Everything around us tells us to take and not give, to put ourselves first and others second. Fit God in somewhere if there's any space left. That is the thought process of the world. "*Times have changed. I'm only doing what is perfectly acceptable by our society.*" But what society is that? In what society is immorality acceptable? What society that finds nothing wrong with hedonism, putting one's pleasure before every other good in life, including respect for others, respect for country, respect for life? **It is the world of selfishness and pride where God is not wanted. It is a world of darkness. It is a world to which we Christians cannot belong. It's Satan's world! It is the world that Jesus Christ came to save!**

**"I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, .... Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect."** (Romans 12:1-2) We were joined to a new world when we were baptized. Each of us is a key part of the new world, the Kingdom of God. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in each of our lives who look to us to illuminate their darkness with the Light of Christ. The problem is that we can easily be distracted by all that is around us. We can easily reject all that is within us. And so we often straddle major issues in life. How did we get into this? Well, Jeremiah really put it so poetically well in the first reading (Jeremiah 20:7-9). "**You duped me Lord, and I let myself be duped.**" Jeremiah laments all the ridicule and suffering he endures for the Lord's cause. Jeremiah was called to be the Lord's prophet in a time when people preferred their own counsel and wished for an easy solution to their problems that didn't involve faith or sacrifice. He is dejected because his mission is as hard as he imagined, but he let the Lord talk him into it anyway. When facing the hardship of decisions made, we often ask ourselves, "**What was I thinking?**" Jeremiah is having one of those moments. Despite difficulty and dejection, he carries on because he knows he is heralding the truth, something no one can turn their back on. He knows his message will save his people. He was literally "duped" into a life of Love that is far more demanding than he ever expected. We Christians too, embrace Jesus Christ for one reason only: "**Show me my heart's desire, O Lord, for I am wounded by your love.**" as St Columban said. Remember, God doesn't love us because we're worthy. We're worthy because he loves us. We don't deserve his mercy, but we soak it in and thereby are transformed.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been "**wounded by the Lord's Love**". When we made the conscious choice of Jesus Christ, we set out on a course of action that does not allow turning back. Any kind of love—for a parent, spouse, child, or friend—will reach a point when it is no longer easy. For love to be true, it must be a free choice and commitment. So, to love God

with our whole heart requires the commitment of our time and attention. True love takes a leap of faith, which is what frightens nonbelievers. Many people are fine with going to church every now and then or volunteering for a charity from time to time (and posting it on Instagram, of course). Loving like that does not require us to make any kind of definitive change, any commitment. But loving God with everything means that all we do is for love of him. We trust that he will take care of us.

But sometimes when life's crosses are especially heavy, it is hard for us to continue loving. At times, like Job in the Old Testament, we find ourselves rebelling against the suffering that God permits to come our way, instead of finding its hidden meaning. Those can be lonely, dark times, full of temptation and sadness. But God promises that he will love us faithfully. As St. Paul wrote I 1 Corinthians 10:13: "**God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it**" Jesus didn't let us suffer alone. He came and walked beside us through the incarnation, comforting, strengthening, and inspiring us with his example of self-sacrificial love. When family members, coworkers, or neighbours find themselves bending under the weight of a heavy cross, we must be Christ for them, reminding them that God's love is real, that Christ has given meaning to their suffering. We must help them continue to pray when their faith is wearing thin. We must comfort the sorrowful, visit the sick and imprisoned, counsel the confused, and show the face of God to those who are having trouble finding it. **The more we help those around us carry their crosses, the more Christ-like we become, and the more Christ himself will be able to help us carry our crosses.**

***Let's take this opportunity to renew our lives in the love of God. Jesus always shows me that the path of love is the path of humility, the path that puts others in the first place. It is a path of simplicity that does not seek great things, but that is grateful for what it receives.***