

LECTIO DIVINA OF THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME B - 01/17/2021

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer: God our Loving Father, we thank You for your Son, our Lord Jesus, the spotless Lamb who is without blemish or defect. He died in our place. He has washed us with his sinless blood. We lay our sins on Jesus, your spotless Lamb. Thank You for bearing them all and freeing us from judgement and condemnation. We confess our sins to You, the big and small, so that our crimson stains are washed white in the blood of the sinless Lamb of God. Jesus, the Lamb of God, when you walked this earth, you did not consider heavenly equality, though that was yours to choose, but took the role of servant, and in humility and obedience, allowed the rough nails of our sin to be hammered into your flesh for the sake of our salvation and for which we thank you immensely. Lord, Jesus, the Lamb of God, bless all of us this evening who are entering into the meditation of your eternal word for our spiritual nourishment that we may worthily and meaningfully participate in the Sunday Liturgy. Send forth your Holy Spirit upon us and illumine our minds and hearts to be receptive to your life-giving words and bear fruit in personal, family and parish life. Amen.

First reading: A reading from the first book of Samuel 3:3-10, 19

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was. The Lord called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am." Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." So he went back to sleep. Again the Lord called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep." At that time Samuel was not familiar with the Lord, because the Lord had not revealed anything to him as yet. The Lord called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the Lord came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God

Commentary: The first reading speaks about the call of Samuel who was miraculously born to Elkanah and Hannah who dedicated him in his early childhood to God's service in the Temple at Shiloh, as a helper to the priest Eli. God called Samuel one night, and Samuel thought it was his master Eli's call. Twice God called, twice Samuel went to Eli, and twice Eli told him to go back to sleep. The third time God called, and Samuel went to Eli. Now the old priest realized what was going on and told Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if He calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.'" God called Samuel and he became an illustrious figure, ranking with Moses and David as a man of God. God often calls ordinary people, including the young, to serve within the community. Consequently, we all need guidance in discerning and responding to His will. Is God calling us for a special mission? Are we really listening?

Responsorial Psalm 40: Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I have waited, waited for the LORD, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry. And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Sacrifice or offering you wished not, but ears open to obedience you gave me. Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not; then said I, "Behold I come."

R. Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

In the written scroll it is prescribed for me, to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!"

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Commentary: 'Sacrifice or offering you wished not'- The religious ritual in David's time involved sacrificing animals in the tabernacle. David says these acts were meaningless without right motivations. Going to church, Giving offering and taking the communion should be done with an attitude of devotion to our Lord who desires our true obedience to his designs and selfless service to Him and His children.

Second Reading: A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 6: 13-15, 17-20

Brothers and sisters: The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body; God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God

Commentary: Corinth was a wealthy pagan city, having a free space for intellectual debates, philosophies and liberties. One of the greatest sins of the seaport city was prostitution. Even a few new christians tried to justify prostitution as part of the Christian liberty. They did not care about human body. So Paul taught them that both body and soul were holy components. He said that since God's Spirit dwells in us, we have become temples of God and consequently our bodies are sacred and

therefore we are called to be holy. Just as God called Samuel and Jesus called his apostles, the Corinthian Christians were called to lead a life of holiness.

Gospel Reading: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John 1:35-42

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" – which translated means Teacher –, "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" – which is translated Christ –. Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas" – which is translated Peter

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Meditation: John the Baptist describes Jesus as "the Lamb of God". (Jn 1:29) When John introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God to the Jewish people, the immediate thought and memory should have been the Passover Lamb of OT. Passover was the annual celebration, remembering and thanking God for their liberation from Egypt where they were slaves for 430 years. The book of the Exodus, Chapter 12 details the story of the Exodus. God called Moses to lead the Jews out of Egypt. But the Egyptian King Pharaoh refused to let them leave the country and in order to shatter his arrogance and make him come to his senses, God sent 10 plagues on the Egyptians. It was the 10th plague that the Jews particularly remembered at Passover. The 10th plague was God's sending the Angel of Death to destroy all the first borns in the land of Egypt. However, the Angel of Death passed over (from which we get the word PASSOVER) those Jewish households where the blood of a lamb had been sprinkled on the door posts. The angel of death killed all the Egyptian first borns but saved all the first borns of Israelites. Only after this terrible disaster, Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt. God commanded the Jews to celebrate His act of liberation and salvation by holding a festival each year, which they called the "Feast of Passover". In that festival, each Jewish household was to sacrifice a lamb WITHOUT BLEMISH and this lamb was known as the Passover Lamb.

So when John called Jesus as the Lamb of God, John was saying three things about Christ.

- 1. The lamb without blemish:** As the Passover lamb was to be a lamb without blemish, so Jesus was the lamb without blemish, conceived in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.
- 2. The lamb of protection:** As the blood of the lamb protected the Jewish households from the wrath of the Angel of death in Egypt, So Jesus, the Lamb of God offers us protection from the effects of our sin when we participate in His holy sacrifice.

3. The lamb of sacrifice: As the Passover Lamb was sacrificed in place of the first born, Jesus sacrifices his life for our sins. And this is what John meant when he called Jesus as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Difference between OT sacrifice and NT sacrifice: The book of the Hebrews in 10:14 strikes a very clear difference between OT and NT sacrifice. The sacrifice of Jesus is perfect and ultimate because he died only once for all. In the OT, the high priest sacrificed the lamb and sprinkled blood of the lamb on the Ark of the Covenant whereas Jesus gave his own blood for us and made covenant with us and that is why it is called New Covenant.

Jesus the Lamb of God: what does it mean for us?

Liturgy: In the Holy Mass, we pray three times using the exact phrase "Lamb of God". A) In the Gloria we sing, "Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world" B) Before the communion, we pray "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of world, Have mercy on us. C) The priest, taking the communion in his hand, prays "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb". Those words are very important, revealing the very essence of Jesus as our Savior. When we utter this phrase, we are to remember the salvation history of the humanity. It reminds us of our own forgiveness by his passion and death. It reminds us of our eternal life.

Invitation to Introduce Jesus: John the Baptist introduced Jesus to his disciples. Today people are looking for someone to give them security in an insecure world. As baptized people in the person of Jesus and members of his mystical body the church, our job is to point them to Jesus and to show that he is the one whom they seek. we are invited to introduce Jesus to those who don't have any experience or those who really need him for their salvation.

Missionaries and Evangelizers: When John introduced Jesus to his disciples Andrew and Simon Peter, they left John the Baptist and followed Jesus then and there. First Andrew believed in Jesus and then he brought Simon Peter to Jesus and thus Andrew became the first missionary. The church is missionary by its very essence "go and proclaim the gospel to all nations". Like them we are called by the sacrament of baptism to be missionaries and evangelizers of the gospel of Jesus first by our life and then by our missions in different capacities.

Concluding prayer: Lord Jesus, our Passover Lamb, we thank You for sacrificing Your life on the cross for our sins. Because of Your sacrifice, we stand before You as pure, holy and justified. Because of Your obedience and sacrifice, there is no longer a void between us and our Heavenly Father. You were wounded for our transgressions. You were bruised for our iniquities. When we were utterly helpless, You came at the right time and died for us sinners. You are the King of kings and Lord of lords. A passover lamb was sacrificed and its blood was used as a sign of redemption from death for the children of Israel in the Old Testament. We, your children in the New Testament, have been washed and redeemed by your blood and thus we stand justified before you, worthy of eternal life although we are sinners. Thank You for redeeming us and placing the Kingdom of God within us. May we appreciate your love and sacrifice for us and joyfully proclaim you and meaningfully pray at the holy mass, "Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world" (Hail Mary/ Priestly Blessing)