

Mass of Wednesday, September 02, 2015

Readings: First Reading – Colossians 1: 1-8

Gospel- Luke: 4: 38-44

Brothers and Sisters we thank God for the Mass we are celebrating today. For a couple of days, during the first reading, we have been reflecting on St. Paul's letter writing to the Church of Thessalonica. But today we began reading a Letter of Paul to the Colossians.

For today's gospel, it is a continuation of chapter four which talks about the ministry of Jesus in Galilee. My homily today will base on four points. The first three will come from the gospel and the last one will come from the first reading. Here are the points am going to share with you this afternoon. 1) The Ministry of Jesus marked the end of the reign of Satan 2) Prayer and good deeds are inseparable 3) The role of women disciples in the Church 4) Our undivided faith in Jesus.

I hope all of us know that according to Luke Jesus traveled only once from Galilee to Jerusalem. When he arrived to Jerusalem he suffered death but he rose after three days. Maybe one could ask: If Jesus on his way to Jerusalem met people only once, how did the people remember all what he taught them? The answer to this question is that it is the Holy Spirit who helped the disciples to remember everything they heard from Jesus. So I hope the Holy Spirit will help you to remember my homily.

First Point: The Ministry of Jesus marked the end of the reign of Satan: Two days ago we heard the Manifesto of Jesus (Luke: 4: 16-30) that He has come to bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind, liberty to the captives and freedom to the oppressed. In today's gospel we heard that when he was in the Synagogue there was a man with the spirit of the unclean demon. When the man cried, "Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are –the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him and said, "Be quiet! Come out of him!" The demon left that man. This ministry of exorcism shows that the Kingdom of God which is preached by Jesus has defeated the reign of Satan. Satan is the symbol of all the negative forces which hold humans captive. And the greatest negative force is sin. As disciples of Jesus we have to allow Jesus to rebuke all the "demons" in our lives which hinder us from the ongoing conversion and transformation.

Second Point: Prayer and Good deeds are inseparable: We see that when Jesus left the Synagogue he immediately went to the house of Simon Peter and healed the mother-in-law of Simon who was suffering from a high fever. While Jesus was in the Synagogue He was in prayer and after prayer He went to perform a good deed at the house of Simon Peter. As followers of our Master, we have to combine our prayers and good deeds. Today, each of us is invited to examine in her or his life how he or she combines these two virtues in the daily living.

Third Point: The Role of Women disciples in the Church: Why does Luke mention the cure of Simon's mother-in-law? Does Luke want to inform us that Simon was married? I don't think so! The Mother-in-law of Simon is a symbol of the women disciples in the Lucan community and in the Church as a whole. We have to acknowledge and appreciate the role of women in the Church and the Church's leadership has to continue to empower women. The healing of the mother-in-law of Simon is a sign of a redeemed disciple. We see that after the healing she waited on the guests. The ministry of women in the Church is remarkable. We have to promote their ministry in the Church by giving them leadership positions. Women have to be honoured in the Church because they have played a big role in the work of redemption and evangelization.

Fourth Point: Our undivided faith in Jesus: The Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians was among the four Letters which Paul wrote when he was in prison. The other Letters are Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon. Though Paul didn't visit the Christian community of Colossae, he wrote to warn them against false teaching from the Greeks and Jews. Some of the Judeo-Christians were still insisting that the Sabbath observances or circumcision were prerequisites for a gentile to become a Christian. For the Greeks, the matter of the body was evil so it is not possible to be redeemed but only the soul. Through this Letter, Paul urged the Christians of Colossae not to heed to that erroneous teaching. He told the Christian to have faith only in Jesus. They must put their faith and trust in Jesus alone. Like the Christian in Colossae, we too must give our unwavering faith to Jesus. Maybe this example can help us to understand the meaning of undivided faith in Jesus. Most of us have gone to the airport to pick up a friend or relative. When the monitors show that the plane has landed, you could see how people stare at the main gate hopping to see his or her visitor. At that intense moment this person who is waiting for a visitor could be even stepped over by another person but she or he will not notice anything because all his or her attention is at the gate waiting to see the visitor. Like those people who glare at the gate ignoring everything around, we are invited to have our focus on Jesus alone.

Brethren, let us ask God to open our hearts in a special way so that we may receive the teaching of Jesus and Paul that we may be effective disciples in our respective ministries and apostolates.

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