

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Isaiah 53:10-11
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
Hebrews 4:14-16
Mark 10:35-45

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 18, 2009

Word: **Commitment to community is faithfulness to Christ.**

Theme: **We are faithful to Christ when we render unselfish service to community.** [Servanthood]

Promise: ***If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him.*** (Is 53:10)

Reflection:

Today's first reading is taken from the second Section of the *Book of the Prophet Isaiah*. It speaks about a suffering servant whose greatness will be seen for all time. He will take upon himself the guilt of us all, and will bring many to union with the Father. St. Jerome, the great scripture scholar, used to refer to Isaiah as the fifth evangelist because his prophecies of Jesus were so clear that you would have thought Isaiah was present at the time of Jesus. No, this section of *Isaiah* was written over five hundred years before the Lord. But he certainly understood the coming Suffering Servant of God. In fact *Isaiah* even tells us that the Servant will die and yet be preserved from death.

Our lives are a pilgrimage to seek out and meet our Lord. We often meet him here in our Church, or in our Community. We meet him in the Word of God and in the Eucharist. We meet the Lord in those who reach out to us for help especially in those who fell victims to the spate of typhoons that have befallen our country. We meet the Lord within ourselves as He reaches out to others through us. We even meet the Lord in those whom we don't like or find hard to love for in them the Lord is forming us to become humble and compassionate.

Do we ever think about what we receive when we reach out to help others? Yes, there is that warm, fuzzy feeling. We feel good about ourselves. There is nothing wrong with that, but there is a lot more that we receive. We receive God's Grace. We are given a dose of humility. We are not concerned with completing an assignment or service hours. We want to do it again and again because we are experiencing God because when we feel good when we give then we are not actually giving at all. In order to comply with the Will of God, we must experience some degree of pain and discomfort when we give or when we try to do a good deed. Giving is not the end-all and the be-all of charity. True charity is when we can step into the shoes of those to whom we give. We must feel their longings and their pains. In other words, we must unite with their own sufferings.

And whenever we speak of suffering, the experience of Saint Maximilian Kolbe always comes to mind. Church history shows that Saint Maximilian on August 14, 1941 died of starvation in the place of a young father so that he may live. We view this act of self-sacrifice as an extremely beautiful example of Christian love. But what did the young father gain from it? He gained the normal life span of a human being on earth. What Jesus has done for each and everyone of us far surpasses what St. Maximilian has done for the young man. Through Jesus, we are not

gaining the normal life span of a human being on earth, but eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Through the atoning Blood of Christ, the Heavenly Father will no longer remember our sins. And this is what it is all about. Sharing in the suffering of Christ as Saint Maximilian did is the key that unlocks the door to eternal life.

During today's Gospel Reading, we read how John and James upset the other disciples when they asked Jesus for the honor of sitting at the right and left side of His heavenly Throne. Teaching them to be spiritually minded, Jesus told the disciples, to become great, they must first become servants, they must be a slave to all. Jesus Himself did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. His example of perfect love is our example.

There is a story of the comparison of what true love is as against false love. A few years ago, in one of the cities in Canada, there was an organization that collected clothing for the needy. The workers of this organization had the opportunity of experiencing the grace of God at work, seeing how hundreds and hundreds of Christians supported the cause by generously donating clothing that helped those who lived on the street, the unwed mothers who needed baby clothing, the large families, the low-income families, etc. Many of the supporters, wishing to remain anonymous, left their bags of donated clothing at the door during the night. God only knows who these generous people were.

But, every now and then, someone would telephone and ask for a donation to be picked up. This required a volunteer to use his own time and pocket money to pay for the gas to pick up the goods. On one occasion, the bags of clothing were picked up only to discover that while they contained brand new men's shirts, the lady of the house had decided to cut off all the buttons, including the cotton around the thread that held the buttons. In other words, the shirts had become useless. And then there were those who had left their bags sitting in a damp corner of the basement or in their garages for months, the bags now being filled with bugs and moldy clothing.

In this kind of volunteer work as in many other worthwhile charities, it is easy to see who will be first and who will be last. It is easy to see who is serving others and who are serving themselves. God did not write the rules for every circumstance. But He gave us a heart and He wrote His laws on it. He gave us faith so we can live by it and logic to ensure that our faith is sound. If we hardened our hearts, we cannot confess our faith. If we hardened our hearts, we cannot hear the Spirit of Christ whispering the laws of God within us. If we hardened our hearts, our logic becomes irrational. Our thoughts, our words and our actions become irrational.

What have we done for those who lost their loved ones when the waters came rampaging to uproot their homes. Did we just mouth words of sympathy and we think this is enough? Did we just speak of how well we should come to the aid of the need and with how charity work can be done or did we dip into our pockets or into our bank accounts to help those in need.

Brothers and sisters, God's Throne has become the Throne of grace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who **"being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on the cross"** [Phil. 3:7-8] so we may receive the mercy of God and be freely justified through the Sacred Blood. The horrible sufferings that were inflicted upon Jesus from the moment of His arrest until His death on the Holy Cross, He accepted them willingly for you, for me, for each and everyone of us, so that we may qualify to inherit the Kingdom of God. If only sinners could perceive that **"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."** [Lk. 15:7]

We sometimes ask ourselves: why does Jesus not answer prayers. It is because we are not in a state of grace, nor having the life of Christ in us, **"We [should] know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will."** [Jn. 9:31] Do we want our prayers answered? Do we want to be abundantly blessed by God? Then let us humbly submit ourselves to His Divine Will in servitude and obedience including getting our feet wet and muddy to help those in need and not do charity work with our lips.

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Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

This week, let us reflect upon our thoughts, our words and our actions:

1. Are they confessing the Lord Jesus Christ in all things?
2. Are we being thankful to the Lord Jesus for what He has done for us, giving up His life so we may inherit eternal life in the Kingdom of God?
3. Are we servants and slaves to all so that at the end of our pilgrimage on earth, we will be worthy of being elevated in the Kingdom of God as a star that shines forever?

Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

October 19, 2009 (Mon):	Rom 4:20-25; Lk 1:69-75; Lk 12:13-21
October 20, 2009 (Tue):	Rom 5:12, 15, 17-21; Ps 40:7-10, 17; Lk 12:35-38
October 21, 2009 (Wed):	Rom 6:12-18; Ps 124:1-8; Lk 12:39-48
October 22, 2009 (Thur):	Rom 6:19-23; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 12:49-53
October 23, 2009 (Fri):	Rom 7:18-25; Ps 119:66, 68, 76-77, 93-94; Lk 12:54-59
October 24, 2009 (Sat):	Rom 8:1-11; Ps 24:1-6; Lk 13:1-9

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"