

Blue Mass

September 26, 2019

Striving for justice brings peace and harmony to a community or a nation. When chaos erupts – when law and order break down – people suffer. Eventually no one is safe, and all lives are in jeopardy. As law enforcement and first responders, you know the truth of this. Your faithful commitment sends you into harm's way every day. For your dedicated service to our community, I thank you from the very bottom of my heart! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

The purpose of God's law is to establish, maintain, and restore – when necessary – right or just relationships with our neighbors, our environment, and God. That is at the heart of the message of the Bible, and it is at the core of Jesus' teaching and healing ministry. He risked his own life as Son of God to heal and reconcile people with God and one another. That may sound very attractive. So we are not surprised that people flocked to see and hear him throughout Galilee. Reports even reached Herod the Tetrarch who ruled in Galilee and was disturbed by Jesus' popularity. Herod had already killed one prophet (John the Baptist), and later in the gospel, he will conspire with Pontius Pilate to have Jesus' life ended.

In today's gospel Jesus is nearly finished with his ministry in Galilee. Soon he will resolutely set on the road to Jerusalem where he knows what awaits him: suffering and death – but also resurrection by God's power. The crucifixion is not the end of the story. We set our hope on the future – as bleak as it may look today – because of Jesus' resurrection and God's firm promise to create a new heavens and a new earth – a kingdom where mercy and compassion, peace and justice, unity and harmony are found.

The prophet Haggai confronted the people of God with the real world – they work hard but are not happy. They focus their attention on themselves and neglect their relationship with God and their needy, less fortunate neighbors. This is a powerful lesson to us today. Pope Paul VI said it clearly, "If you want peace, work for justice!" Pope Francis challenges us to be missionary disciples of the risen Lord – to listen attentively to the word of God, let it take deep root in our hearts, and act on it every day.

My dear sisters and brothers, gathered around God's altar, let us renew our commitment to justice and peace, showing respect for the dignity of every human person. Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us. The Holy Spirit guides us. *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*