

## Homily – Caring for Creation Mass – 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time Mission Espada – Sunday, September 12, 2021

In our first reading a prophet struggles to carry out his God-given mission. The darkness of the world closes in on him. He is ridiculed and persecuted by others. He pours out his heart to God. God's response is that the prophet must open the ears of his mind and heart even more attentively to hear the word of God. The prophet will find help only in God who is faithful to those who carry out his word and are faithful to their mission in life. In our day there is also much darkness.

Pope Francis has said that *“Sobriety and humility were not favorably regarded in the last century. And yet, when there is a general breakdown in the exercise of a certain virtue in personal and social life, it ends up causing a number of imbalances, including environmental ones. That is why it is no longer enough to speak only of the integrity of ecosystems. We have to dare to speak of the integrity of human life, of the need to promote and unify all the great values. Once we lose our humility, and become enthralled with the possibility of limitless mastery over everything, we inevitably end up harming society and the environment. It is not easy to promote this kind of healthy humility or happy sobriety when we consider ourselves autonomous, when we exclude God from our lives or replace him with our own ego, and think that our subjective feelings can define what is right and what is wrong.”* (LS: 224). But God will set things right eventually. We need to trust this.

The second reading reminds us that having faith in God is not enough. We must live in accord with God's word. We need to proclaim the gospel in both word and deed – especially by the way we live our daily lives. It is not enough to tell someone to “have a nice day!” We are

all responsible for the society in which we live and for our common home. We have to make it possible for everyone to “have a nice day” by ensuring that everyone’s basic human and civil rights are defended and protected – by striving so that every life is nurtured and enhanced and everyone can carry out their God-given mission in life. This includes safeguarding the planet for the sake of future generations and also for its own sake, as – like the Pope has said – *“The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. ... The universe as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God. ... Hence we need to grasp the variety of things in their multiple relationships.”* (LS: 84, 86).

Every disciple is challenged by Jesus’ question in today’s gospel: Who do you say that I am? There was much speculation at his time about who he really was – a simple carpenter from Galilee or someone else? Simon Peter gives a simple, forthright answer: You are the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah. But what does Peter mean by these words?

When Jesus explains that he is a suffering, dying, and rising Messiah, Peter objects! Jesus looks at his disciples – all of us – and tells Peter – and us – that we do not think as God does. Peter and all of us have a lot to learn about being a disciple of the crucified and risen Lord. Our thoughts need to be purified. Our attitudes have to be transformed. As sinners, we need constant conversion, repentance, reform, and renewal. Led by the Holy Spirit, all of us can live as authentic disciples. *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*

Our Lady was the first disciple. Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us. Dear Lady, teach us how to be faithful to your beloved Son!