

**Homily – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
San Fernando Cathedral – February 13, 2022**

The first reading, from the prophet Jeremiah, presents a contrast. It first uses the symbolism of the desert as a place of death, of dryness, as a lesson that must be applied to the life of the believer. Then it says that it is in God that one must trust, because in him is the experience of water in the desert of life. If we want to have life, we must be next to the stream, otherwise we would be like the barren bush in the desert.

Then, in our second reading, St. Paul explains that because Jesus rose from the dead, there is forgiveness of sins and eternal life. However, our culture often invites us to close off any transcendental horizon. It wants us to focus on ourselves, to stick almost exclusively to the present, to forget about the past and especially the future, perceived – particularly by young people – as dark and full of uncertainty. In that context, the idea of eternal life may be seen as something tedious, even sad or completely insignificant and irrelevant to the present. But what is really our hope?

Pope Francis says that “The human desire for life and happiness, closely connected to the desire to see and know God, constantly grows and is renewed by passing from one stage to the next without ever reaching its end or fulfillment. The experience of the encounter with God in fact transcends any and every human achievement and constitutes the infinite and ever new aim.” Eternal life is the perfect vision of God, the overflowing of everything for which the soul hopes, the infinite satisfaction of our deepest desires and the complete joy where everyone is pleased with the rejoicing of others.

When Jesus proclaims the blessing of the poor, those who are now hungry and weeping, and those who are hated on account of Him, he is certainly pointing to eternal life. However, at the same time he is referring

to the present moment. If it is true that Jesus will raise us at the end of time, but it is also true that, in a certain way, with him we have already risen. Pope Francis says that “Eternal life has already begun in this moment, it begins during our lifetime, which is oriented to that moment of final resurrection.” In the beatitudes Jesus gives us the formula for true happiness, together with the promise that it will never end. The resurrection of Jesus is the cause of our resurrection, not only on the last day, but of our conversion to Him right now. The hope we share is so great and powerful, that many have died for it and many more live by it.

The core of the message is that God loves us. He loves you! The revelation of God’s love for us is his Son – Jesus himself – who spared not even his own blood to share the Father’s own glory with us. God’s gift for us is so great, that nothing can compare to it; not even all the money, power or pleasure. Jesus is the life-giving stream in the desert. He sends us the Holy Spirit. We must make room for Him in our hearts. We must empty ourselves from any love of self in order for our love of God and neighbor to allow Him to inhabit us. Our trust in Jesus must grow without limits because nothing we can do can be enough to thank Him. Becoming poor and hungry for the Kingdom of God, weeping and being hated for its sake, means that no pain or sorrow can deprive us of the joy of living united to the risen Jesus. Moreover, any hardship is worth embracing for the love of God.

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, intercede for us and enable us to make the radical choice of following Jesus in everything we do. Remind us constantly that it is worth trusting Him.