



Hosanna



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SUNDAY LITURGY

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31ST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Year A

INTRODUCTION

In today's Gospel, Jesus invites us to be humble in serving God and our fellow human beings. Jesus, in his time preached with authority in order to set an example for others. His authority was made manifest in servant-leadership. He said "I came not to be served but to serve". He gave importance to the ministry which is service oriented. He never boasted himself for what he was doing. He preached what he practiced. What he has practiced he preached. That is the reason he expected the people around him to do the same. Let us try to fulfill the wish of our Lord.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Forsake me not, O Lord, my God; be not far from me! Make haste and come to my help, O Lord, my strong starvation!

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

In the first reading Prophet Malachi warns the priest and elders among the Israelites. He is reminding them to live a moral life. He wanted to re-establish the covenant with the people who broke it.

A Reading from the Book of Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10

I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts; and my name is feared among the Nations. "And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you. You have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in your instruction."

Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm (130)

R/ Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.

O Lord, my heart is not proud nor haughty my eyes. I have not gone after things too great nor marvels beyond me.

R/ Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.

Truly I have set my soul in silence and peace. A weaned child on its mother's breast, even so is my soul.

R/ Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.

O Israel, hope in the Lord both now and for ever.

R/ Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.

SECOND READING

St. Paul, in the second reading, gives much importance for the gospel and not for himself. He is concerned about giving the Gospel to believers. He gave prime place for the proclamation of the gospel. He offered his own self for it.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians

2:7-9, 13

We were gentle among you, like a nursing taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our ourselves, because you had become very dear to us.

For you remember our labour and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God.

We also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the Word of God, which is at work in you believers.

The Word of the Lord

ALLELUIA (Mt 23:9-10)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You have only one Father, and he is in heaven; you have only one Teacher, the Christ!

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL READING

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew 23:1-12

Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practise. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders: but they themselves will not move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. But you are not to be called brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

The Gospel of the Lord

HOMILY

NICENE CREED

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: God created us in his image and likeness. He gave every one of us the originality of his image. Our selfishness for name and fame misused the image of God.

At times, we become like Pharisees and Sadducees to propagate hypocrisy. Let us strive to be more good and humble. Therefore, let us ask the Lord to make us humble and good.

LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER

1. Lord, bless our Holy Father Francis, our Archbishop Bernard Moras, priests, religious and all those who carry out your mission. So that, they become good and humble in serving God and human being.

Lord hear our prayer.

2. Lord Jesus, you are our master and leader. We pray for the leaders of our nation. Grant them the heart of humility, to be true to serve the nation in the spirit of servant leadership.

Lord hear our prayer.

3. Lord, bless all of us sinners, give us good heart to mend our sinful way of life into a holy life. Bless us to bear witness to your gospel.

Lord hear our prayer.

4. Lord Jesus, you are the model of servant leadership. Help all men and women to lead their family. Bless and inspire them, so that they may give up their selfishness and pride to create a better future.

Lord hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Father, you created us all in your image and likeness. Trusting in your providence, we have put forth our prayers and petitions. If they are pleasing in your sight, grant these to make our lives meaningful. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

May these sacrificial offerings, O Lord, become for you a pure oblation, and for us a holy outpouring of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PREFACE I (Ordinary)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvellous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the working of your power, O Lord, increase in us, we pray, so that, renewed by these heavenly Sacraments, we may be prepared by your gift for receiving what they promise. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

REFLECTION

This time Jesus speaks to the crowd. Jesus intends to give lessons to the listeners using the situation and the theme. Jesus teaches them to identify what is true and what is false in religion; as long as human is involved in regulating the religion. There can be false elements entertained with the false teachers. The history will give us proofs about false doctrines and teachers even in God inspired religion. It is the responsibility and obligation of the believer to find what is true and

what is false in a religion. In living a religion, the believer is expected to be self-disciplined. Self-discipline is drawn from the scripture and the laws of the religion. When a discipline falls out of the scripture and the laws of God, he/she may become a hypocrite. Hypocrisy may rise from the pride and vain glory of man. When man exalts his rationality and make himself god, he becomes a religious hypocrite. One who follows the true religion must uphold the truth. If someone follows a false doctrine, causes doom to self. Ultimately, a Christian should know that Christ is the truth. His gospel is the rule of life towards the heavenly glory.

Moses was one of the greatest teachers and interpreters of God's law. Moses guided the people as long as he lived among the Israel. When he parted from them, he handed them to the care of Joshua. In the same way, the Pharisees occupied the seat of Moses to interpret the law to the people. They had the obligation to give the truth to the people. Because, they enjoyed the seat of Moses and the authority. In the letter to the Romans, it is said, "you, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on the other, you are condemning yourself because you who pass judgment to the same things."

The hypocrisy in the religion, make the religion bad. But the bad leadership in the religion renders bad people and not the religion. The leaders are obliged to be self-disciplined because they enjoy the place of authority and have the responsibility to lead the people to the truth. Jesus condemns the Pharisees and

other religionists. He never condemns the truth. Truth remains true all the time. Even when the truth is hidden, altered or falsified, the truth remains the same. The one who causes damage to the truth must be condemned. There are two things involved here; the truth and the one who proclaims the truth. The truth remains same whenever and whoever proclaims it. The truth does not change according to the mind of the one who teaches. It does not mean that all those who teach the truth are acceptable by God. God accepts the truth and those who live the truth. As St. John says, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Jesus condemns the Pharisees of levying heavy burdens on the people. They remove mercy of God in making law rigid and harsh. They bring the truth to some set of rules and regulation and its adherence. The teachers use the religious authority to burden the people.

A true religion presupposes certain things. The truth cannot be altered or damaged by anyone. The truth can be hidden but not lost. The words of the teacher may or may not uphold the truth. When the truth is spoken, it needs living the truth. No one enjoys greater position in the presence of God because he is in the religious authority. Greatness of the person is measured by the service to the truth and those who hear it. Finally, the deeds of a man bear witness either for him or against him. Discerning the truth and living what is discerned is the most urgent call.

- Rev. Fr. Arockiaswamy Sebastian

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