

2019.12.08 Homily

As I was discerning what the Lord's message might be for us this weekend I was getting this image of the Rose Window of Notre Dame Cathedral (see picture below), in which Christ and Mary are in the centre and the Saints surround Him in a beautifully harmonious order. This window beautifully illustrates the glory of God and also the message of the Father through today's readings. Then I also received this image of the window being broken and pieced together by a person one by one. I believe through this image the Lord is asking us during this Advent to piece back together every aspects of our lives, with putting Christ back into the centre. So the Lord is calling us to a kind of reordering of our lives.

In the first reading the prophet Isaiah prophesied about a beautiful harmony in creation, like 'the wolf lives with the lamb, ...calf and lion feed together...the infant plays over the cobra's hole.' This is a prophecy about the time when the glory and knowledge of God will fill the whole of creation. So where there is knowledge of the Lord, there is harmony, too. The saints who surround Jesus and Mary in the rose window are filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and that common knowledge of the Lord unites them in harmony. So this reading encourages us all to come to a fuller knowledge and understanding of the Lord, so that we can be in greater harmony with each other as well. Please don't think you know everything about God. Let's not settle this way, because it is not true.

So how do you come to a fuller knowledge of the Lord? First you have to be attentive to the Lord's voice, willing to hear His voice through the Bible and through your life experiences, and ask the Holy Spirit to bring the Lord's voice ALIVE to you, ie. to notice and understand what the Lord is trying to tell you personally, because He doesn't just tell humanity general information about himself through the Bible, but He has a specific, personal message to each one of you both through the Bible and through your life experiences. This is what hearing the Lord's voice means; not just reading the words, but also receiving His personal message to you through these various ways.

Knowledge of the Lord, and especially knowledge of his unconditional love and mercy should lead you to knowledge of yourself and to a better understanding of your own goodness and value, and of your sins, therefore knowledge of the Lord should end up with repentance and renewal of your commitment to God knowing His mercy and love for you. So listen to the voice which is crying in the wilderness saying 'repent and renew your baptismal commitment to the Lord'.

So go to your quiet room at home or somewhere else; go to your own wilderness, where no one will distract you, and there humble yourself before the Lord! Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and guide you, then review your recent life and humbly acknowledge, if there is any separation between God and you and between you and other people and come back to the Lord through repentance.

The next step is to renew your commitment to Christ either by a personal prayer of renewal or if you have committed any mortal sin you are encouraged to go to confession for which there will be opportunity during Advent on the 21st December. It is like cleaning the window of your life so that the light of God, the Holy Spirit, may shine through your life. This renewal and cleaning of our hearts and minds is the main purpose of Advent. This renewal strengthens our bond with our heavenly Father and one another, and where there is a bond, a commitment, there is also the Holy Spirit who binds us together in love. The window panes of the rose window are held together by some bonding material, and that symbolises the Holy Spirit.

I believe this vision of the man piecing back together the window panes of the broken rose window is about God's call to us to renew and repair our relationship with Him and one another.

It is not a one-off fix. It can take a long time until we are completely healed and are one with Him and one another. Since it can be a long process you may give up at one point. That's why it is so great what St. Paul tells us in the 2nd reading: 'May He who helps us when we refuse to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to God...!'

