

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

"COME TO ME": AN INVITATION OF HOPE AND LOVE



This Sunday's Scripture readings speak directly to the reality of our world today. **How can we not feel overwhelmed by so much suffering by the victims of hatred, violence, and exclusion?** There is a great temptation to think that, given the state of things, nothing can be done. Yet today, the Word of God comes to shake us out of that mindset. The message conveyed through His messengers is one of hope. Even in the most desperate situations, the Lord is present; He does not abandon us. We can always count on Him.

The first reading takes us back to a time long before Jesus Christ the period following the return from exile. The Jewish people were utterly disheartened; their hopes for restoration had been dashed. But then, the prophet stepped in powerfully to rekindle their hope, reminding them that God would bring forth a new world.

This is the Good News we discover in the message of Zechariah, as well as throughout the Bible. It speaks to us of God's passionate love for our world the very Good News to which martyrs, both past and present, bear witness.

In his Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul speaks to us of the fulfillment of this promise. At our baptism, we were immersed in Christ's death so that we might rise again with Him. **The Apostle urges us to "live according to the Spirit" by allowing ourselves to be guided by God. The Holy Spirit longs to take hold of believers and pour into them the love that dwells within God.**

In the Gospel, it is Jesus Himself who invites us to take the next step: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28) When Jesus speaks these words, He is facing the people He meets every day on the roads of Galilee simple folk, the poor, the sick, sinners, the marginalized. They have all followed Him to hear His message of hope. Jesus Himself sought out these weary, exhausted crowds "like sheep without a shepherd." He sought them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal many of them, body, and spirit. **And now, today, He calls them to Himself: "Come to me!" He promises them comfort and rest. This invitation from Jesus extends to our own time.** He wishes to reach all those oppressed by precarious living conditions. Every day, men, women, and children fall victim to human hatred and violence. It is to everyone that **the Lord speaks: "Come to me!" He promises what only he can bring about. With Him, there is rest.**

If Jesus asks us to take up His yoke, it is to show us that He wants to share the burden that weighs us down the burden of suffering, illness, loneliness, and fatigue. Nor do we forget those exhausted by life's trials. We are like the bearers of the Gospel who brought the paralyzed man to Jesus; it is the faith of those bearers that brings salvation. We cannot go to Jesus without them. **Let us entrust to the Lord all those who labor under the weight of burdens too heavy to bear.**

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