

Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...

Monday, 14 October 2019

Monday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Rom 1:1-7; Lk 11:29-32

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The first reading from the letter to Romans is a quick reminder for us especially in this extraordinary missionary month. St Paul gives us a vivid description of who we are and our role as Christian disciples. Like Paul our call is also to be 'a slave of Christ Jesus', 'an Apostle' - one who is sent, 'set apart for the Gospel of God' and 'called to be holy.'

Proofs, they are meant for police stations and courts not for a believer. The people who drew near to Jesus often recognised God's presence in Jesus, even better than the Scribes and Pharisees did. However, at times they were curious to see signs and wonders without any real commitment in following Jesus. Recall the incident from the same chapter in the Gospel in which Jesus cast out a demon and enabled a mute man to speak, some accused Jesus of being Beelzebub, but "others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven" (Lk 11:16). Jesus answered the objection about Beelzebub in 11:17-28. Here he turned to their demand for a sign in 11:29-32.

He says, "This generation is an evil generation; it is asking for sign" Why does Jesus say so? They might be looking for a sign in order to accept and believe in Jesus, and to change their lives! It is not enough that they have Jesus, the Son of God, among them. They still are looking for something more. See, there wasn't any people like Israelites that witnessed such a number of signs, wonders and miracles starting from their life in Egypt till the time of Jesus. Still they couldn't make use of them for their life, they remained unfaithful. The Ninevites were foreigners yet they believed in what Prophet Jonah had foretold and they repented. The Queen of Sheba, again a foreigner from a faraway place, visited Solomon and acknowledged his wisdom and his God. Our Lord's point is that if foreigners can believe and acknowledge God, what excuse do Jews, who can see the Son of God teaching in their midst have? And yet they meet him with resistance rather than repentance. St John rightly says, "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:10-12)

Jesus gives a rather stern warning to his generation when they demand a sign from him. When Jesus is asked to give proof for his claims he says in so many words that he is God's sign and that they need no further evidence from heaven than his own person.

What would Jesus say about our generation? Not only have the contemporaries of Jesus, we the present generation also seem to ask for signs from time to time. Visions, apparitions, miracles and other sensational events seem to have great impact in our life too. Not because we are 'doubters', rather they seem to give us greater certainty in what we believe. Yet Jesus insists that the real sign is his own person: in him God has become a human being, and who sees him sees the Father (Jn 14:9). As the responsorial psalm, "**The Lord has made known his salvation.**" Looking for other signs will not get us anywhere. He reminds us: instead of

demanding signs, pursue the truth; stop seeking signs, it diminishes Christ and His gospel instead of exalting Him; and hearing the good news of Jesus Christ and knowing Him should result in worshipful repentance as the people of Nineveh.

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