

Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...

Tuesday, 22 October 2019

Jn 11:1-16

Fr. Mathew Maniampra CMI

I am sure as a baptized Christian and Jesus' disciple, you are proud of your identity. I feel, you have more reason to be proud of, because you are a missionary- one who is sent. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (Jn 20: 21). You are privileged by virtue of baptism to do what Jesus did and entrusted to continue what he did. We are co-workers and co-builders with God to heal, restore and to promote life in full measure. Today's gospel narrative is about life in full measure.

The raising of Lazarus, the longest continuous narrative in St. John outside the passion account, is the climax of signs. In John as we know it, miracles are not miracles but signs of the kingdom present in the person and ministry of Jesus. To our natural eyes and curious minds anything out of ordinary is a miracle and we are interested in it as something seen or experienced beyond we could imagine and expect. Most things we qualify to be miracle is more than that, and is an invitation to look beyond the here and immediate. Most miracles are signs and pointers to the Kingdom values and eschatological realities. The raised Lazarus is the sign of real life, that the dead and raised Jesus will give to the whole humanity who believe in him. "I am the resurrection" He says, "If anyone believes in me, even though he dies, he will live." (Jn 11:25). Oftentimes, Johannine gospel is characterized by the irony and paradoxical truths as is revealed in today's Gospel. Jesus gift of life to Lazarus leads to his own death. Raising of Jesus heightened the suspicion and fears in the Sanhedrin which eventually led to the conspiracy and crucifixion of Jesus. Belief in the resurrection is not an appendage to Christian faith: it is the Christian faith. Christianity will be a monumental fraud if there is no life beyond now.

Every missionary endeavor and missionary activities small or huge is centered around the theme of life: pointing toward a life giving God who give us abundant life. This abundant life not exclusively reserved for in the next life. It is beginning now itself and completes itself in the eschatological times. To be a missionary means to be life giving person now itself by leading people into pastures they can nourish themselves. It may be by extending our unconditional human love that may help the recipient to receive Gods love much more naturally. Those poor people who received Moth Teresa's love would have never doubted god's love, I guess. She believed where there is love, there is God. When we love like God, we become channels of grace to other people to find themselves. The first reading tells us of the need of mutual charity among us to give greater witness of the power of God's presence in our midst. The warmth of missionaries, I have witnessed, made the poor to think and feel of a God who is with them. By Caring love and valuing gestures along with the power of the word of God proclaimed become powerful instruments to experience God's redeeming love, now for the poor and marginalized. This is a preamble to look forward to the greater and lasting

life that is to come in the end about which the gospel signs speak today. In Luke, we see the death of another Lazarus (Lk 16: 19- 31), referring to the blessedness of the life that came at the end. The Rich man was punished for not giving the life he could render to Lazarus while he was on this earth. The lesson is simple: everyone who received more life has to give away more now aligning the actions towards the fullness of life in heaven. Priests and religious are bound to be greater missionaries having received a lot.

Every effort to promote authentic life is missionary in nature and every healing is partial resurrection and a preamble to the abundant life of resurrection. Every heart without Christ is a mission field.

Published by

CMI General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry