

Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...

Friday, 4 October 2019

Homily on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Gal 6:14-17; Mt 11: 25-30)

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At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will". In today's gospel passage, we encounter Jesus praising His Heavenly Father as Lord of heaven and earth. The grateful thanksgiving not of Jesus expresses the reason of His appraisal too. Jesus words of gratitude reveal the profound nature of God, the Father. He hides the mystery of His Kingdom from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to the infants. This is the true expression of the gracious Will of the Father. This is in fact the logic of mercy. This logic is very well expressed in the election of the apostles and disciples.

The secret of Incarnation is revealed to the disciples who are infants in Wisdom according to the false opinion of men. The mystery of the most perfect divine intervention in the human history which is Incarnation was beyond the comprehension of scribes and Pharisees who pretended to be 'wise and intelligent.' Jesus' reminder in Luke's Gospel is worth reflecting here, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God" (Lk. 16: 15). As Jesus tells his listeners on another occasion, "Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." (Lk. 13:30). This biblical notion that in the end God will turn everything we know upside down is often called the "Great Reversal." Mary's Magnificent, the Beatitude and the parable of the rich and Lazarus are the explicit examples of this 'Great Reversal.' To be humble like infants is mandatory for getting an access to the secrets of God's Kingdom.

The most consoling words of Jesus in this text are "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest." Jesus offers Himself as a comforting place of resort for all those who are carrying heavy burdens. The extraordinary month of mission invites us to think how far we have succeeded in introducing Jesus, the comforting resort to the people who are carrying the heavy burdens of life. Lastly in the Gospel, Jesus invites His listeners to learn of Him the gentle and humble nature.

The Church celebrates today one of the great saints who was even known as 'second Christ' by his committed and radical life of discipleship; St. Francis of Assisi. The Gospel text of today is intimately connected with the life of this great saint. He was an infant before God who tried to adorn himself with the ornament of humility and simplicity. Since he opted himself to be an infant, Jesus could open up the mystery of God's Kingdom for him. He is well remembered for finding out Jesus as His comforting and consoling resort too. His life teaches the present day missionaries that discipleship is all about having a living relationship with Jesus and thus being conformed to Him. St. Francis is the real model who proclaims by his life that everyone who receives Christ receives peace, the peace that Christ alone can give, a peace which the world cannot give !

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