

## Monday Week 16 of Ordinary Time

### First reading, Micah 6:1-4,6-8

#### Reflection

Sacred Scripture (the Bible) is written by human beings “under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (Vatican II; Dei Verbum paragraph 11). Therefore, what we read in the Bible and what we hear at Mass, is God speaking to us. God always exists in the present; the “now” of our lives, (Catechism paragraph 600) and so His words are alive and always relevant. This is why the Bible is always relevant – it always has value for us, even though some of the texts are three thousand years old.

When we read the Bible, then we need to be aware of four different senses of scripture; the literal (that which gives the story for the time it was written) and three spiritual senses; the deeper meaning which serves to guide us each day. When challenged by a text, particularly from the Old Testament and references to situations which are far from our experience, we can use the spiritual senses to help us to understand what God is saying to us today.

The extract from Micah in the first reading is another example of God berating the people for their fidelity to ritual sacrifice but not translating that devotion to God, with an equal devotion to His people. This is the literal sense of Scripture.

Reading it with the eyes of the spiritual senses, we can see that the text points to Christ. He is the new Moses who leads us out of slavery; the one who most perfectly acts justly, loves tenderly, and walks humbly with His Father. And His sacrifice is the perfect one to end all bloody sacrifices. The moral sense of the passage is clear: we too are being reminded to



act justly, love teach other tenderly, and walk humbly with Him. But how can we weak fallen human beings do this? By the grace of the Holy Spirit. And this grace is received through our participation in Christ's one sacrifice, the perfect sacrifice. This is the road to Heaven and our share in the divine life promised to us (2 Peter 1:4).

PS. This picture (The "Mond Crucifixion) by Raphael, illustrates these points very clearly: The angels dancing in the heavenly sphere are catching Christ's blood as a sign of the joy of Eternal Life gained through Christ's Passion, death Resurrection and Ascension. At the foot of the Cross we see Our Lady (looking at us) who walked humbly with God. Standing on the right is St. John the beloved (a young beardless man), who loved Christ tenderly. Kneeling, we see both St. Mary Magdalene and St. Jerome (who lived 300 years or so later). St. Mary Magdalene is famous for repenting of her sins and St. Jerome is seen with a stone in his hand. He used to regularly beat himself with one as repentance for his sins. Both are a sign that in Christ they learned to act justly.

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