

*Saturday of Week 10 in Ordinary time (Feast of **St. Anthony of Padua**)*

Readings at mass - 1 Kings 19:19-21, Psalm 15(16):1-2,5,7-10, Matthew 5:33-37

I feel unworthy to talk about the saint, let alone take the word of God up on my lips. Isaiah said, “I am a man of unclean lips”, if the great prophet said this about himself after seeing the beauty and holiness of God, how much more should we admit this. St. Peter after seeing our Lord, fell at His feet saying, “I am a sinful man”. St. Anthony had this great awe and reverence to the Word of God, like the Psalmist, “My heart stands in awe of your words” (Ps 119:161). His heart was that good soil that held the Word ever so dearly.

This reading is quite apt for the saint because like Elisha who left his family become the disciple of Elijah, kissed his father and mother goodbye when he was 15, though they were reluctant to let him go. Afterwards St. Anthony asked to be moved further away for a better solitude and it was there that he learned the sacred scriptures, memorising them by heart. “And Mary pondered these things in her heart”. The saint deliberately distanced himself from distractions, taking to obedience the words in the book of Sirach, “only the one who has little business can become wise. How can one become wise who handles the plough...and is occupied with their work, and who talk is about bulls?” (Sir 38:24-25). Certainly, we must do our jobs that keep the society rolling, but not by compromising prayer. Remember the words of our Lord to Martha, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, there is need of only one thing, Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her”.

There is certainly an emphasis on fewer words and more listening, and notably on the action. Let your words be few, “Yes if you mean yes, or no if you mean no”. This seems simple and yet is it? How often do we use words to either please people to the point of displeasing the Lord, or words to wound others again, displeasing the Lord. “If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth” (Jer 15:19). There is no need for more words if we are doing. Notice how Elisha does not say a word to Elijah who told him he can go back but turned away and did what he needed to do and came and followed Elijah with a great sense of urgency. This faith in action is what Jesus referred to as ‘Love’.

Jithin Titto, 13/6/2020