

Saturday, 5th week of Eastertide

Readings of the mass – Acts 16:1-10, Psalm 99(100):1-3,5. John 15:18-21

Indeed, how good is the Lord. As we cannot have more than one master, whom better than the Lord can we have? As He made us and we belong to Him, who can better lead us in the right paths. We read in the collect of today, “that those you render capable of immortality...may by *your guidance* attain the fullness of glory”. I am certain that you do not need me to point out that the Lord does not refer to Himself as master to Lord it over us, but because we ourselves can become like what it says in the scriptures– “a masterless charioteer of one’s own life”(Sirach 20:32).

So, St. Paul who was so tuned into the voice his ‘Master’, discerns where God is calling him, perhaps through something supernatural. Notice how he wastes no time as soon as he is convinced that God is leading them this way. There is a sense of urgency about it – “We lost no time in arranging a passage”. This is also an important point for us, as this point is when the Gospel is carried across to the European continent! So, serve the Lord with gladness sings the psalmist and, St. Paul says elsewhere that God loves the cheerful giver. We know that St. Paul met with persecution and finally the death of a martyr, so the Gospel was not received with open arms and there will be people opposing it. Jesus promises this persecution or rejection or dismissive attitude.

Even amidst great rejection or persecution of different natures, we must remain in the words of Jesus, “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Mt 5:43-48). We are called to also act in ways that seek peace and reconciliation with others, to not cause unnecessary issues. “Seek peace and pursue it” (Ps 34:14). Let us go back to the first reading and see how St. Paul had Timothy circumcised. Also notice the words, “The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy”. So, we cannot really say phrases like, ‘the only thing that matters is what God says about me’. We are also called to discern the voice of the Lord through what others speak to us. This is different to seeking to please ‘people’ at the cost of displeasing God of course, because then we are serving them instead of Christ (Cf. Gal 1:10). This is that ‘fine balance’ that I am trying to work towards too - “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour” (Lk 2:52).

Jithin Titto, 16/5/20