

## **2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE A**

*Isaiah 49: 3, 5-6; Psalm 40; 1 Corinthians 1: 1-3; John 1: 29-34*

Holy Spirit Parish in Mustang, OK: January 19, 2020

When you walked into church, you were probably struck by the barrenness. The Christmas Season ended last Sunday, so the poinsettias and evergreen trees and lights and nativity scene are all gone. But in the barrenness, the green vestments of Ordinary Time worn by the deacon and priest remind us that new life still surges forth in our midst.

For the joyful message of Christmas flows into every day as living water, bringing forth new life in every season.

God so loved the world that he sent his only Son.

God so loved us that his only Son descends in humility to wherever we are, even into the darkest and messiest places of our life to find us.

Jesus, as Son of God, is born in a stinky stable

and then as an adult plunges into the dirty water of the Jordan.

The sinless one joins his life to sinful humanity, fully human like us, seeking us out wherever we are lost in our sin and separated from God.

Because of God's love for us in Christ Jesus, we know God has a plan for each one of us. God formed you in your mother's womb, and God called you from your mother's womb to be the best version of yourself by sharing in God's life.

Sin wrecked this plan, but Jesus, as the Lamb of God, comes to take away the sin of the world.

He comes to join heaven to earth, to save us from our separation from God by offering his life as the Lamb of God on the cross, dying to redeem us.

By being baptized into Jesus' saving death, we have been made one with God, and by rising with him from the waters of our baptism, we have been given new life. The Spirit who animated Jesus' life and his ministry, the Spirit who drew him into Communion with the Father, was poured into our life at baptism, empowering us to fulfill God's plan for our life.

By our baptism, we were sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, to be the very best version of ourselves, to be who God has made us to be.

We do not earn holiness or even achieve it.

It is a pure gift from God as we share in the life of the Risen Christ.

We have Christ's life in us.

As a way of response to this great gift of divine life, we act and live in a certain way.  
We act like Christians, not in order to become holy,  
but in order to be consistent with the holiness we have already received.

We grow into who we are and have been made to be  
by remaining in Communion with Christ Jesus, sharing weekly in his Body & Blood.  
He calls forth from us by his love the very best version of who we are in Him.  
He teaches us how to live as a child of the Father, as someone empowered by the Spirit.  
He not only reminds us that we are never alone, but that we have been given  
brothers and sisters to help us along the way, which is one reason why the Church exists.

When we forget who we are and to whom we belong,  
when we turn away from Him and choose not to live in holiness,  
not to be the best version of who God created us to be,  
the Lord Jesus meets us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to welcome us back home.

When we stray away from Him, he keeps looking for us, seeking us where we are hiding,  
and bringing us back home.  
Because he is not only the Lamb of God but also the Good Shepherd.

We humbly acknowledge with John the Baptist, "*I did not know him*" which means  
we did not see him coming to us in the person in need of our love and we turned away.  
We did not see Jesus nor receive him when we hurt another person  
with our words or deeds.

When we choose to selfishly do our own will instead of the will of God, our encounter  
with Jesus in Confession strengthens us to humbly say every day to the Father:  
"Here am I, Lord, I come to do your will."

We constantly need to re-orient our life to Christ.  
Each day we have to choose to live with Him and in Him.  
Our life of faith is a countless series of conversions, of turning back to Him.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that we will be made a light to the nations,  
so that the good news of God's saving love can reach to the ends of the earth.  
This theme will be echoed a few weeks from now as Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount  
in Matthew's Gospel will remind us that we, his followers, are called to be  
the light of the world.

By our deeds of self giving love, the love of God shines through us.  
By our deeds of sacrificial love, we become the light of the world.

This Monday we celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr., who spent his life bringing light into the darkness of racial segregation and discrimination.

While sitting in a jail cell in 1963 he wrote:

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”*

We can be the light of the world and overcome hate with love by living out with Jesus the Beatitudes he taught and embodied.

We can grow in holiness, becoming even more who God has called us to be in Christ, by putting into practice the Beatitudes.

For when we are merciful, instead of judgmental or condemning, then the light of Christ’s mercy not only flows through us into the darkness of a sometimes merciless world, but also abides in us as a great, saving gift for ourselves.

When we are peacemakers, working to bring people together instead of driving them further apart, we experience in ourselves the peace of being who we are—God’s children, and brothers and sisters to every human being.

When we hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
when we hunger to make right our relation to others,  
when we thirst to make right our relation to Creation,  
then our hunger and thirst to be right with God is satisfied.

As we live out the Beatitudes, we grow into who God has made us to be in Christ Jesus. We become a light shining in the darkness for others to find their way to God.

*Fr. Joseph A. Jacobi*