

A Reflection from Fr. Canisius for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners,

I am glad to be back home after some vacation time! I bring you warm greetings from family and friends. Ordinary Time gives us the opportunity to focus on the ordinary aspects of our faith and realize their continuity through history. We pray that we see Christ more and more in the people we meet and in the ordinary things of life.

Once we see something from a different point of view, we cannot un-see it. It changes our perspective, and we never see the same way again. Several times, Jesus brought his disciples to mountaintops to see things differently. He took Peter, James, and John to the mountaintop and allowed them to see his transfiguration, after which he headed resolutely to Jerusalem, fully aware of the danger awaiting him.

In today's Gospel, Jesus leads his disciples to the mountaintop and teaches the beatitudes, an entirely different point of view on suffering and discipleship than the worldly perspective. Blessed are those who are poor, meek, and mournful. Blessed are those who are merciful, clean-hearted, and make peace. Blessed are those who are insulted and persecuted. Suffering will not be the end for them, because they will be comforted, they will see God, they will be rewarded in the kingdom of heaven.

After hearing Jesus' words, the disciples are reassured that following Jesus is worth the cost: that good will have the last word. We, too, can adopt this beatitude point of view and see our suffering and hardship in a different way. Saint Paul tells us that God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and the weak of the world to shame the strong. We do not have to be the wisest person, or the strongest person; we do not have to be "something" in the eyes of the world for we are everything in the eyes of the Lord.

The love and grace we receive in the Eucharist is a foretaste of the fullness of joy in Christ we will one day know. Suffering is real and discipleship is not without risk, but through his word and sacrament, we are within sight of the kingdom. We know the beatitudes, and we see the blessings. To this holy liturgy, we bring our woundedness.

Have a blessed week!

Fr. Canisius