

HOMILY by Fr. Anthony Davis

“Here I am, Lord; I come to do Your will!”

January 19, 2020

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Is 49:3, 5-6; 1 Cor 1:1-3; Jn 1:29-34

The central themes of today's readings are a challenge to live like the Lamb of God and to die like the Lamb of God. In both the first and second readings God calls individuals to His service. The Gospel passage presents three themes, namely, John the Baptist's witness to Jesus, Jesus' revelation (epiphany) and identification as the "Lamb of God," and the call to discipleship. Those who are called gradually accept the identity of the One who calls them.

Like John the Evangelist, we may choose to accept today's Gospel as a personal and corporate call to become witnesses to the Lamb of God, the "suffering servant", who is called Jesus. In other words, after his baptism, Jesus was consecrated and commissioned to engage in a ministry of universal salvation. This means that, as God formed Isaiah from his mother's womb as His prophet and a "light to the nations," we too are called by our baptism to be that same "light to the nations," revealing the Christ. Thus, being born again in water and the Holy Spirit gives us Jesus' mission of being the "light of the world." And this gives us the answer God wants from us when He invites us to similar service: "Here I am, Lord; I come to do Your will!" (Resp. Ps.).

SUMMARY: Through Baptism into the Body of Christ, we are empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit to help free and build up the oppressed. That is to say, our faithful response to God is to rebuild broken lives, reconciling them with God's love and justice through Christ Jesus our Lamb and Lord. Through the love of the Lamb of God, we are called to better the lot and improve the broken spirit, of all who have been exiled from the possibility of hope and from God's righteousness or who are burdened by the yoke of spiritual, social, economic, and political dislocation. In other words, through the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the glorified Lamb, we are called to empower the human spirit with a sense of identity and purpose.

CONCLUSION: We need, therefore, to be witnesses to the Lamb of God. HOW? Today's Gospel reminds us that being a disciple of Jesus means that we grow by Faith to become witnesses for Him. And bearing witness to Christ is an active, not passive, lifetime enterprise. One cannot be a disciple of Jesus at a distance any more than one can be a distant lover. To love Christ is to be drawn close to Him, to know Christ personally, to experience Him through the Bible, prayers and the Sacraments, and to inspire others to want to know Jesus. To help Christ is to share the Good News about Him with others.

Indeed, the essence of our witness-bearing is, first, to state what we have seen and believed and then, to invite others to "come and see" (Jn.1:38-40).

For instance, as Catholics, we tell others about, and enthusiastically invite them to good restaurants, barbers, optometrists, football and golf games, etc. Why isn't there the same fervor over inviting and encouraging people to come and participate in our Church activities?

Often, we hesitate to do so because of the false notion that talking about religion is taboo in our culture, or that religion is a private matter and shouldn't be shared with others, or that we don't have much of a personal Faith to share, or that our worship services would not be appealing to others. Remember what Jesus said: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..."

Hence, one of the differences that Faith should make in our lives is the desire that others -- especially those without a religious Faith -- might also share in and benefit from the relationship God offers through Christ. If we are not willing to invite others into this experience, what does that say about our experiences with Christ and with our Church?

Blessed are we when we bring to others the gifts of love, peace, justice, tolerance, and mercy, thus becoming witnesses for the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by saying: "Here I am, Lord; I come to do Your will!"