

Sunday, January 19, 2020

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Responsorial: Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10

Gospel: John 1:29-34

Beholding Jesus, the Lamb of God, More Deeply and More Prayerfully

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

We hear these words at every Mass as the Host and Chalice are raised for all to see. They are so familiar that perhaps they have lost some of their force. So let's take a closer look at this marvelous invitation.

Behold. Don't just glance. Behold. Look deeply, carefully, and prayerfully. Look with the expectation that you will discover something important. Trust that Jesus wants to reveal himself to you.

Behold, the Lamb of God. What are you beholding? God's greatest gift to the world—to you. You are beholding Jesus, the one true sacrifice sent from heaven. He is the spotless Lamb, innocent of all sin and meek and gentle of heart. He is the fulfillment of ancient Israel's Passover celebration. He has come so that you can pass over from death to life, from slavery to freedom.

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away sin. Look closely. See in this Host the promise of forgiveness. See Jesus, who surrendered his body and blood on a cross for you. See Jesus, who has taken your very sin upon himself and brought it into the grave with him. See him rising again, leaving your sin behind in that grave, where it remains today, dead and buried. You are no longer bound by it. Jesus has borne it away, and you can walk away from it too—step by halting step as you continue to place your faith in him.

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Not just your sin, but the sin of every single person on earth, past, present, and future. No one is beyond his reach. No one is devoid of hope. Everyone can know forgiveness and freedom. Even the people you are struggling to forgive. Behold him, and believe that he can bring reconciliation and healing to all people.

Behold, the Lamb of God! And receive him with joy and an open heart.

"Lord, I am not worthy. Only say the word, and my soul shall be healed."

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

Sunday, January 19, 2020

Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. The first reading is the second of four “Servant of the Lord” prophetic oracles in Isaiah. It ends with these words: *It is too little, the LORD says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.*
 - In what ways has Jesus been a restorer and a light to the nations so that the Lord’s salvation may reach to the ends of the earth?
 - As Catholics, and followers of Christ, do you believe that you have also been called to be a light to others? How do you participate in bringing Christ’s love and light to others? In 2020, is the Lord asking you to do more?
 - What about someone you know who has fallen away from and Christ and his Church? How can you help to bring him back?
2. The responsorial psalm begins with these words: *I have waited, waited for the LORD, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry. And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God. Sacrifice or offering you wished not, but ears open to obedience you gave me.* The psalm ends with these words: *In the written scroll it is prescribed for me, to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart! I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.*
 - How would you describe the ways the Lord has *stooped toward me and heard my cry* when you cried out to him in prayer? How did your reaction compare to the reaction of the psalmist?
 - The psalmist also says that *to do your will, O my God, is my delight.* What parts of the Lord’s will for your life are a *delight* for you? What parts are not a *delight* for you, and what steps can you take to change this?
 - What is your reaction to the final words of the psalmist? *I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.* May this be a way for you to do the Lord’s will as well?
3. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the members of the church at Corinth of their call: *Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - What do you think St. Paul meant when he said the Corinthians *have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord?*
 - Do you see this also as your call from the Lord as well? Why or why not?
 - What do you see as the obstacles to this call and how can you overcome them by the Lord’s grace?
4. The Gospel reading begins with these words of John the Baptist: *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, ‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’ I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.” John testified further, saying, “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit,’”*
 - The Gospel reading speaks of being baptized (immersed) with the Holy Spirit. How conscious are you during the day that the very life, power, and love of God dwells within you through the Holy Spirit?
 - What are some steps you can take to open yourself even more to this truth, and be more sensitive to the leadings of the Spirit?
5. The meditation is a reflection on the Gospel reading. It closes with these words: *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Not just your sin, but the sin of every single person on earth, past, present, and future. No one is beyond his reach. No one is devoid of hope. Everyone can know forgiveness and freedom. Even the people you are struggling to forgive. Behold him, and believe that he can bring reconciliation and healing to all people. Behold, the Lamb of God! And receive him with joy and an open heart.”*
 - What are some ways you can put these words from the meditation into action with your family and others?
 - What are some ways you can put these words into action each time you attend Mass and receive communion?

Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord to receive his healing touch on your life. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as a starting point.

“Lord, I am not worthy. Only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization (www.christlife.org), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (www.nsc-chariscenter.org), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National Fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of The Word Among Us (www.wau.org), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry. He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org or mblumberg@aol.com.]