

Reflection for the 7th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Since, January 16, 2022 the second reading on Sundays has come from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. This Sunday our second reading is from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, and the same can be said for next Sunday. But on March 6, 2022 when we celebrate the First Sunday of Lent our second reading is from a Letter by St. Paul but not to the Corinthians, rather it is to the Romans. It is hard to believe but in this Ordinary Time between the Christmas Season and the Lenten Season, the second reading on every Sunday was from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. It is interesting to think that for 7 weeks we have been reading St. Paul's first letter to the people of Corinth. This letter was written in 53 or 54 AD at Ephesus, in Asia Minor. The reason that St. Paul wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians was to respond to problems that arose in the Christian Community in Corinth.

After St. Paul's initial missionary trip to Corinth from 50 to 51 AD, St. Paul receives reports that in the Christian Community of Corinth there is dissension among the converts to the faith. St. Paul begins his letter with a reminder that all are to be regarded "*as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.*" St. Paul then follows up this statement by addressing matters of immorality, marriage, celibacy, the conduct of women, the propriety of eating meat offered to idols, and the worthy reception of the Eucharist. St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians also addresses the issue of members of the Church of Corinth quarreling about the nature and distribution of spiritual gifts. St. Paul points out that jealousy among those working in the Spirit of God is as irrational as jealousy between the eye and the ear, both are essential to the well-being of the body as a whole. In this letter St. Paul is encouraging the Church of Corinth to live in harmony and peace with one another. At the end of the letter, St. Paul reaffirms the reality of Christ's Resurrection as the very foundation of the Christian faith.

From the 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time, February 6, 2022 to the 8th Sunday of Ordinary Time, February 27, 2022 the second reading for Sunday is not only from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians but all these four readings are taken from chapter 15 of this letter that St. Paul wrote. Of these four readings the one that appears to have the most profound message is the reading this Sunday which is 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. In this reading St. Paul mentions that "*the first man, Adam, became a living being, the last Adam a life-giving spirit.*" The last Adam that St. Paul is writing about is of course Jesus Christ. This last Adam (Jesus Christ) brings to humanity the potential for each one of us to be complete, to be a part of the new creation.

Our second reading this Sunday is informing us that we as part of God's creation begin our journey as a physical being and we have the choice to allow our spiritual selves to be awakened. It is through using our physical self, our five senses, that we are able to encounter the spiritual. It is the physical self that is the conduit for our spiritual self. We use our faculties of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch to help our spirit to connect with and communicate with our Lord. Living in this physical world it is only natural that we would use our physical self to communicate about our spiritual self.

We can look at the seven sacraments of our faith and see seven grace filled moments that utilize the physical to express and experience a spiritual reality. Be it the Holy Oils, Holy Water or a Baptismal Candle, these physical items and others help us connect with the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a physical being created by God, it is only natural and we would find a need to connect with God using our physical self. This does not mean we are only limited to our physical self. It is through Jesus Christ and his birth, death, and resurrection that we can embrace the old and new Adam. We are not limited to the old self, but we can embrace the new self and look forward to eternal salvation.