



Christ in Our Neighborhood

*Baptized
in the Lord*

Prayer

O God, bestow in abundance Your mercy upon us. Grant that we may use the good things that pass away in such a way as to hold fast to things that last forever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

A listening heart helps us to be more present and understanding of others. A listening heart helps us to discern our thoughts and our actions. A listening heart leads us to perform acts of charity and love. A listening heart helps us to hear and follow the voice of God.

Cultivating a listening heart begins by centering your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. When, after saying all that you want to God, allow an equal time to listen in silence to the Holy Spirit's response.

Learning to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit helps us to listen better to others as God listens to our prayers. When we are centered in Jesus, all of our actions and words flow forth from Him.

Questions

- How much time do you spend in silence on a typical day?
- How does it make you feel when someone truly listens to you?
- What is your greatest obstacle to listening to another person?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Romans 8:28-30

We were made a new creature through the waters of baptism. We have become adopted sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of Christ, members of His body, and co-heirs with Him of the eternal kingdom.

Such is the plan, the purpose, and the promise that God has for each person who loves Him.

From the very first moment of creation, He knew each of us by name. And those He foreknew, He predestined to share in his plan of salvation.

God causes all to work for good for those who love Him. If we remain in His love, by knowing and keeping His commands, then He will come to us and He will live in us. Then, slowly as clay upon the potter's wheel, He forms us into His own divine image and likeness.

All this God freely does for us because He loves us and wants us to live with Him forever.

Question

- How did you come to know God's plan, purpose and promise for you?
- Can you recall specific times the Holy Spirit may have helped you to remain faithful?

Christ in Our Neighborhood is the evangelization program of the Diocese of Phoenix.

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

Jesus tells us that the kingdom is a treasure worth searching for.

Once they have found it, good disciples sell everything else they own to obtain it.

St. Cyprian tell us, “The kingdom of God means Christ himself. For he is our resurrection, since in him we rise.”

St. Paul said, “The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

By the accounts of Jesus and the saints, we know that the kingdom of God is something very wonderful. It is something that we deeply desire and are searching for. It is something very precious, that when found we would gladly sell all that we have in order to obtain it.

Even greater than our searching for God, is His searching for us. As with a net upon the sea, He will gather us up. The good will go into the kingdom of heaven, the bad into the fiery furnace.

In Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God has already come, and is coming. And those who wish to tell others about it, (the scribes) should use all things of the past and today (the old) and point to all things of the future (the new) to describe it.

Question

- How is the kingdom of God experienced in everyday life?

This Week's Task

- Pray for a listening and understanding heart that you may hear God's voice and follow Him.
- Pray that God will make His kingdom known to you in today's world.
- Do one thing this week to bring forth God's kingdom of mercy and compassion to others.

Group Prayer

The leader invites the group to pray the following words together.

A listening heart prepare in us O Lord;
that we may always hear
and follow Your voice.
Help us to bring forth
the reign of God in our lives
and in the lives of others,
even as we look forward to the coming
of Your kingdom in heaven.
Help us to know that You have a plan,
a purpose, and a promise
for each of Your children,
so that where You are we also may be. Amen.

Psalm

Psalm 119

Psalm Response: Lord, I love your commands.

I have said, O LORD, that my part is to keep your words.
The law of your mouth is to me more precious
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

Let your kindness comfort me
according to your promise to your servants.
Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

For I love your command more than gold,
however fine.
For in all your precepts I go forward;
every false way I hate.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

Wonderful are your decrees; therefore, I observe them.
The revelation of your words sheds light,
giving understanding to the simple.

R. Lord, I love your commands.