



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Loving Father, You have prepared a table before us. May we recognize the unmerited gifts You have provided and always give thanks to You, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Joshua 24:1-2,15-18

After Moses led the people through the desert, Joshua then led them across the River Jordan and into the Promised Land. It is here where we take up this First Reading.

As we reflected on last week's choice to sit at the banquets of Wisdom or Folly, Joshua offers his people a similar choice. He says, "Decide today whom you will serve, the gods your father served" before crossing the Jordan River or "the gods of the Amorites" in the Land of Canaan. Of course, to choose either set of false gods would be foolish and would only lead to death. Therefore, Joshua insists on the correct choice: "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." The people respond, "We will also serve the Lord."

Choosing one false god over another false god is true folly. There is only One True God. Yet, how often are we caught up in the many things of this world - the latest fads, TV episodes, sports games, etc - bouncing from one god to the next. As Christians, we must remember that we have only one choice. We must choose Jesus above all things, "for he is our God."

Question

When did you choose to follow our One True God?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:21-32

Joshua gave the Israelites a choice to follow the false gods of the past or the future — which wasn't a choice at all. He then urged them to stand in the middle and follow their One True God.

St. Paul offers a similar choice. Are we to choose to remain with our father or our mother when we select a spouse? Or, will we choose to be joined to our spouse alone? Clearly, Paul's answer is for man and wife to become one.

A man and wife becoming one and leaving behind their past mirrors our desire to radically choose Christ above all things and to be joined to him. St. Paul says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church."

As members of the Body of Christ, we have only one true choice. We must remain in Christ as He remains in us. Not out of a sense of obligation do we make this choice. Rather, we freely make this choice out of love for the Lord who loves us first.

Question

What steps have you made to remain in the Lord?

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Commentary

Gospel: John 6:60-69

Over the past few weeks, we have read from what is referred to as “The Bread of Life Discourse” in the Gospel of John.

After hearing Jesus say that unless they eat of His Body and Drink of His Blood they will not have life within them, the people respond, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” Indeed, it is hard to accept and “many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.”

The imagery of choice is clear in our readings today. Do we choose false gods over the One True God (First Reading), or cling to our past over our present marriage to Christ (Second Reading)? In the same way, our Gospel gives us the choice. Choosing to accept Christ totally — especially in the Eucharist — is radical and many cannot accept it.

Even today, many Catholics prefer to go to other churches and/or return to the ways of the world. They have walked away from the Table of the Lord. Jesus asks us the question, “Do you also want to leave?” Hopefully, we have made Peter’s answer in today’s Gospel our own: “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life?”

Question

What pulls you or entices you to return to your former way of life?

This Week’s Task

Many people would rather walk away from the mystery of the Truth of the Eucharist without taking time to study it. Have you attempted to study what the Church teaches about this great Sacrament? Consider studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church and reflect on this powerful Mystery of our faith.

Prayer

Pray these words from the late Cardinal John O’Connor:

“The Christ of Bethlehem
is the Christ of Galilee,
is the Christ of the Crucifixion,
is the Christ of the Resurrection,
is the Christ of the Eucharist.”

The prayer continues with Psalm 34

Psalm

Response: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

The LORD has eyes for the just,
and ears for their cry.
The LORD confronts the evildoers,
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

When the just cry out, the LORD hears them,
and from all their distress he rescues them.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Many are the troubles of the just one,
but out of them all the LORD delivers him;
he watches over all his bones;
not one of them shall be broken.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Conclude with an Our Father