

Reflection for the 28th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Brothers and Sisters: I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians 4:12

Today our second reading is taken from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians. In this reading we are presented with a message that St. Paul is sharing with the Catholic Community in Philippi. This letter is one of the four “*Prison Epistles*,” that St. Paul wrote when he was in prison in Rome. The other three Epistles that St. Paul wrote while in prison in Rome were to the Ephesians, Colossians and to Philemon. Most Scholars think that St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians was the last of the four letters to be written. It is also important to note that this letter that St. Paul wrote to the Philippians was not written as a response to a crisis or a concern, rather he wrote this letter to express his appreciation and affection for the Catholic Community in Philippi.

In St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, he is encouraging them to live as a community of believers living in harmony with one another through mutual humility modeled after the Savior. Our second reading this Sunday taken from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians is informing us that St. Paul has discovered how to live in all circumstances of life, and that is by living a life centered on Christ who strengthens us. St. Paul just simply makes this statement in his letter, but it is this truth that he shares with the people of Philippi. St. Paul in the final years of his time in this world seems to be reflecting on the journey he has taken in this world and what he has learned from his many experiences. He comes to the conclusion that it is only through Christ that we find an inner peace and joy, in this world and in the next.

We can look through the history of humanity or we can look at the people of our day and see people, who spend a lifetime in search of joy or in search of truth. So often this journey leads people to seek wealth, or knowledge, and this path does not lead to the joy or truth that they seek it just leads to more seeking and searching. At times it might lead to a false sense of joy or truth, but the moment is fleeting and in time the search is renewed. St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians reminds them and us that it does not matter how wealthy or poor we are. What does matter is that we have clothed ourselves in Christ, for it is God who will supply whatever we need in accordance with His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

In the parable that is contained within this week’s Gospel Reading, we hear of a King who gave a wedding feast for his son. The original guests did not come to the feast, so the King invited new guests; one of these guests was not dressed correctly, so he was removed from the feast. Jesus follows the telling of this parable with the statement “*many are invited, but few are chosen.*” The parable this Sunday is pointing out that the people of Israel, the chosen people of God, had lost their way and the gift that was shared with them would be shared with the whole world. The first followers of Jesus, the twelve Apostles, and many others that followed Jesus were a part of the chosen people. St. Paul a member of the chosen people, in his letter to the Philippians reminds the Catholic Community in Philippi that what completes and fulfills us, is a life in Christ Jesus.