

Reflection for the 7th Sunday of Ordinary Time

This Sunday our second reading is from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. St. Paul's letter was written in 53AD or 54AD 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 50AD to 51AD, 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 improper eating of meat offered to idols, and the worthy reception of the Holy 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.

In our Second Reading, this Sunday, 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, also referred to as the new 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 can 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.

The message found in our Second Reading this Sunday can be summed up in our Gospel Acclamation which is, "*Alleluia, alleluia. I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: love one another as I have loved you.*" This acclamation is taken from the Gospel of John and his account of what Jesus shared with the Apostles at the Last Supper. In our Gospel Reading this Sunday taken from the Gospel of Luke we hear of Jesus speaking with His Disciples and what He shares with them explains the new commandment. In our Gospel Reading this Sunday we hear of what it truly means "*to love one another.*" We must be willing to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to bless those who curse us. This is a challenging message, and it is a complete message of how one is to live a life embracing the new commandment. As St. Paul wrote his First Letter to the Church of Corinth, he saw a community struggling and encouraged them to embrace the last Adam, the new Adam and the life-giving spirit. It is this last Adam that informs His disciples to completely embrace the new commandment "*to love one another as I have loved you.*"

May we as a faith filled people reflect of how Jesus Christ has loved us, He came into the world one like us in all things but sin, He healed the sick, instituted the seven Sacraments of our faith, preached the good news, and He died and rose from the dead bringing salvation to all humanity. Christ Jesus provides us with the path to journey on from this imperfect, material world to the perfect spiritual world, and it is by embracing the new commandment, "*love one another as I have loved you.*" The challenges that the Church in Corinth was having in 52AD is that they had not embraced the new Commandment that Jesus had shared with His Apostles in the upper room. By not "*loving one another,*" the Church in Corinth had not truly embraced the *New Adam*. They were not on the path to the perfect spiritual world. To be on the path to the perfect spiritual world, the heavenly kingdom, we need to be willing to fully embrace our Lord, Jesus Christ, the *New Adam*, His teachings, and to truly "*love one another.*"