

Reflection for the 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Our First Reading this Sunday, taken from the Book of Wisdom, mentions the night of Passover and the impact that this night has on God's People. Today, the Passover celebration is a major Jewish Holiday that celebrates the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is in the book of Exodus that we hear of God visiting the 10 plagues on Egypt because the Pharaoh would not release the Hebrew people from slavery, so Moses could lead them to the promised land. Before the 10th plague takes place, the Lord God provided Moses with the Passover Ritual that must be followed by the Israelites every year from the time of the 10th plague forward. At the first Passover the God of the Israelites commanded Moses to tell His people to place a mark above their doors with lamb's blood so that the Angel of Death would pass over them. After the death of the firstborn, Pharaoh ordered the Israelites to leave Egypt taking whatever they want. This occurred on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, in the first month of Aviv (Spring). The word Pesach or Passover can also refer to the Korban Pesach, the paschal lamb that was offered when the Temple in Jerusalem stood.

In the time of Jesus, the Israelites would sacrifice the lamb on the 14th day of the month of Nisan and consumed it with bread and wine on the 15th day. The Last Supper was the last meal that Jesus had with His 12 Apostles, it was at this Passover meal that Jesus instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For us as followers of Christ we can find a deep connection with the Jewish people knowing that the source and summit of our Faith is rooted in the Passover meal and the historical event of God freeing His people from slavery in Egypt. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the source and summit of our Faith provides us with the path to be freed from our sins and walk with Christ in the Heavenly Kingdom.

It is in our First Reading this Sunday, with its first sentence referencing the Passover that we are provided with an opportunity to reflect on not just the Passover but also the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This reading invites us to remember and learn from what has gone before us so we can walk close to our Lord. The whole Book of Wisdom is written to edify and instruct the People of God. In fact, if we think of the whole Bible and all of what the Saints have written throughout 2,000 years of faith, we realize how important the past is to our current journey. The Sacraments are graced filled moments, but they also edify and instruct us in the ways of our Lord.

The Seven Sacraments of our Faith provide us with a conduit to connect with our God, but they also provide us with a way to connect with each other as we journey in this world. It is amazing to just think about the Mass and that on any given day throughout the whole world the same prayers and readings are shared at every Mass that is celebrated. Of course, most days there are some optional prayers and even optional readings. There is a unity and comradery that is present for all who gather for the source and summit of our faith, the Holy Eucharist.

As we reflect on our Faith, the Saints and the message contained in the Bible we can see that it is in believing in the one true God and following Him in this world that gives our lives purpose and focus. God has reached out to humanity from the beginning of time and has been calling us to follow Him. As Catholics we can turn to the Sacraments, the Saints, the Bible and find God revealing Himself to us and calling us to follow Him. God is not just calling us to follow Him with no purpose or direction. His purpose is the salvation of all humanity; His direction is to the Heavenly Kingdom.