

Homily for Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2018

9<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time

This Easter Season the movie *Paul the Apostle* was in the theatres. It will be released digitally, June 15<sup>th</sup>. I think, one of the most moving scenes comes towards the film's conclusion when Paul is in conversation with the Roman Prefect, named Mauritius, who is in charge of the Mamertine Prison. This is where St. Paul was being held prior to his martyrdom. Paul tells Mauritius that he isn't interested in trying to reason him into Christian faith. It is Christ, not a human evangelist, who shatters unbelievers' resistance. Paul knows this better than most, given his own conversion. To this, the puzzled prefect asks how the Apostle can so calmly go to his end for such a testimony. Paul explains that this life is like a handful of water that slips through our fingers whether we want it to or not. Eternity is like the water in the ocean. Most people live for the vanishing puddle over which Rome has control, by God's leave. Christians live for the ocean. It's how they can have a peace that passes understanding, and the courage to see life as Christ's and death as gain.

I thought of this scene when reading this morning's passage from 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. This is Paul's last letter. He knows the end is near, something he states explicitly in chapter 4.

*<sup>6</sup> As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come.<sup>1</sup>*

This morning's text, from chapter 1 captures the expansive ocean of eternity on which the Apostle will soon set sail. When we have the perspective Paul presents here it makes all the difference in how we live our days and how we relate to our dear ones.

St. Paul talks about our days with the arresting phrase:

*“the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus”.*

What is life? It is what we experience each day as we live out this years allotted to us on earth. When the substance of our lives is not the handful of water that slips through our fingers but the vast ocean, then the words of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, grace, mercy, peace, power, love and self-control govern how we live. Grace and mercy are the gifts we appropriate through the sacraments so we can know peace. Peace is the fruit of the life allowing God to order how we live each day. It is the greatest consequence of the grace we receive from the Eucharist – for it is that quality of life the Resurrected Jesus extends to those who love him. This peace enables us to be a people whose lives have a power and love that are God-given so we can live with a self-control that allows our appetites and desires to be brought under the Lordship of Jesus rather than the unruly influence of our soul's enemy, the devil.

When we see our days from this perspective we then have a way of relating to our dear ones as Paul did to Timothy. He calls Timothy his beloved child. He has every confidence of the good

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#). (1993). (2 Ti 4:6). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

work Jesus is doing in Timothy's life and thereby encourages him to live a life of charitable courage. Addressing Timothy as his beloved child gives him the space to then call Timothy to a heroic witness:

***Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God,<sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us with a holy calling,<sup>2</sup>***

When we know that our dear ones truly view us as beloved means we can withstand the ridicule of the world because we know a deeper calling inspiring us to holiness. With such confidence in knowing who we are as God's dear ones we can then declare:

***But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me<sup>3</sup>***

Those who know that life is not to just be like a handful of water slipping through our fingers and then is gone but rather our preparation for the ocean of eternity look at our days as a trust. Jesus has entrusted our lives to us and can guard as for eternity as we say with today's psalm:

***To you I lift up my eyes,***

***O you who are enthroned in the heavens!***

***<sup>2</sup> Behold, as the eyes of servants  
look to the hand of their master,  
as the eyes of a maid  
to the hand of her mistress,  
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,  
till he have mercy upon us. <sup>4</sup>***

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible](#). (2006). (Revised Standard Version; Second Catholic Edition, 2 Ti 1:8–9). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible](#). (2006). (Revised Standard Version; Second Catholic Edition, 2 Ti 1:12). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible](#). (2006). (Revised Standard Version; Second Catholic Edition, Ps 123:1–2). San Francisco: Ignatius Press.