

Homily for November 7th 2019
Thursday 32nd Week of Ordinary Time

Today's reading from Romans wants us to understand two dimensions of ethics. Ethics are the principles that govern our lives that are the consequence of faith in Jesus Christ. The first principle is that our lives are not our own. We do not own ourselves, we are not our own masters. God, One and Three, has created us, and Jesus Christ has freed us from sin by redeeming us with his blood. Therefore, he is our lord, and we his servants, committed to him body and soul. Just as the slave is not his own master, but he himself and all he does redounds to the benefit of his master, everything we are and everything we have are geared, in the last analysis, not to our own use and benefit: we have to live and die for the glory of God. He is lord of our life and of our death. That is why Paul writes:

For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.¹

St Paul wants us to understand that we are to live our earthly life in the presence of Jesus whom at present we cannot see because we believe that after death we will stand in the presence of the Jesus whom we will see.

The first ethical dimension of today's reading underscores that our lives are not our own. This in turn is to influence the second ethical statement Paul directs our way. In this life we are learning to take to heart the understanding that we are not to stand in judgement of others but rather we are to remember that we will one day stand under the judgment of God.

We will have to give an account for our life, first and foremost. Therefore when we relate to others we are to have the kind of generosity in our treatment of people that is like the generosity of the shepherd and the woman in the parables from Luke 15. We are to be always looking for those opportunities where we can welcome others into the kingdom of Jesus by extending grace to them.

When we remember that our lives are not our own and we are not to live judgmentally we are living the ethics of grace. To live gracefully means that we are to live joyfully. Joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that allows us to always look at others in our lives with the attitude of possibility where we extend to them the kind of mercy that we pray Jesus will ultimately extend to us when we stand before him.

Joy is that attribute that is able to affirm that because we are increasingly discovering the kindness of Jesus in our lives, we want to express that same kindness to others.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Ro 14:9). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

May we this day consider the attitude of heart, mind and words that we bring in how we interact with others, asking: “Do I live aware that the only judge is Jesus Christ; and because I hope for his mercy to be exercised in how I will one day be judged I want to learn in the present to treat others the way I will want to be treated by the Lord?”

May we reaffirm the ethics of surrendering our lives to Jesus so as to live for him so that in turn people will see in us his mercy.