

JANUARY 23, 2022
Sunday of the 3rd Week in OT
Luke 1: 1-4;4: 14-21

“JESUS’ MISSION, OUR MISSION, TOO.”

“Archbishop Oscar Romero was murdered when, like Jesus, he reminded people of the needs of the poor and the oppressed in El Salvador. The story begins in 1979 when a young priest, Father Grande, was shot and killed on the streets of El Salvador. His ‘crime’ was that he spoke out against the government, which brutally suppressed all forms of protests and executed thousands of innocent people using its notorious ‘Death Squads.’ When Fr. Grande's great friend, Bishop Oscar Romero, was chosen to be the new Archbishop, the authorities thought he would keep quiet on the question of the oppressed poor in that country. Instead, Archbishop Romero became an outspoken defender of the poor and a critic of the state-supported ‘Death Squads.’ To honor the memory of his martyred friend, Archbishop Romero refused to appear in any public ceremonies sponsored by the army or the government. He soon became the voice and conscience of El Salvador. His words and actions were reported throughout the whole world, so that everybody knew the atrocities happening in El Salvador. Archbishop Romero’s fight for human rights led to his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. On March 24, 1980, at 6:25 PM, as Romero was offering Mass in a hospital chapel, a shot from the back of the church struck him in the chest, killing him instantly. Thus, Archbishop Romero died a martyr for the gospel of Christ.”¹

Our gospel speaks about the mission of Jesus not only to Jews but also to Gentiles. When He was in Nazareth, He went to their synagogue and used Isaiah’s prophetic words to describe His mission to all. Jesus said “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”² The word anointed refers Jesus as ‘king’ - not as a king defined by

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

² Luke 4: 18-19 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

material wealth but by liberation from sin, peace, hope, and healing. That's why we call Jesus as Christ means the Anointed One, the Messiah, or the Savior King.

“And what kind of king is Jesus going to be? There immediately follows a proclamation, a programme or manifesto of what we can expect from him. Today we might call it a ‘mission statement.’ They are addressed directly to the materially poor, those in prison, the physically blind, the oppressed and exploited of the world. While Matthew speaks of ‘the poor in spirit,’ Luke addresses the beatitude directly to ‘you who are poor, weep, are hungry and oppressed.’ The message for them is one of hope, of healing and of liberation. This will come about not by some miracle but by the transformation of those who, aligning themselves with Jesus, can put an end to these things.”³ This made Jesus a dangerous person to those in authority, religious authorities of Israel who were jealous and suspicious that ultimately caused His crucifixion and death.

My sisters and brothers, how the word of Jesus get through to us today? what is His message to us? Our Second Reading from St. Paul's 1 Letter to the Corinthians gives us an answer. “The problem with our Christian living is that it is so individualistic. We try to manage things on our own. And that is even true of the way we try to live our Christian lives. But it is not the picture that Paul describes here. He sees the multiplicity of Christians as living members of one Body. Each member interacts in a constant giving and receiving. And each member gets the same respect. In fact, it is the ‘weakest’ and ‘least honourable’ parts which receive greater attention. That is how the words of Jesus in today's Gospel become living realities. For it is in mutual giving and receiving as one Body that we enable each other to experience the enrichment (overcoming our poverty), the vision (banishing our blindness), and the freedom (removing the oppressions and addictions) which Jesus wishes us to have.”⁴

³ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

⁴ *ibid*

My sisters and brothers, the Word of God, the Good News is still threatening and dangerous to some people especially to those who do not accept the good news to the poor when the integrity of the Word God and truth is put into a way of life and practice. “There’s story about a Franciscan monk in Australia assigned to be the guide and ‘gofer’ to Mother Teresa when she visited New South Wales. Thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close to this great woman, he dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, the friar never had the opportunity to say one word to Mother Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet. Finally, her tour was over, and she was due to fly to New Guinea. In desperation, the Franciscan friar spoke to Mother Teresa: ‘If I pay my own fare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane so I can talk to you and learn from you?’ Mother Teresa looked at him. ‘You have enough money to pay airfare to New Guinea?’ she asked. ‘Yes,’ he replied eagerly. ‘Then give that money to the poor,’ she said. ‘You’ll learn more from that than anything I can tell you.’ Mother Teresa understood that Jesus’ ministry was to the poor, and she made it hers as well. She knew that they more than anyone else needed good news.”⁵

So, as we reflect today’s Word of God, Jesus’ mission, let us remember all who sacrificed their lives like Oscar Romero and all martyrs of faith. And for us, let us continue to try, seek, and strive to live faithfully to Christ, our Lord and Master, in the world and in our daily lives. Let us be courageous and hopeful that amidst the dangerous truth of the good news that Jesus gives, we stand for Him and ready to die for Him

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, you are my hope and the fulfillment of my dreams. Fill me with joy and courage brought by your Word and the Gospel of truth and peace. In flame my heart with a burning love for the poor, the neglected and the oppressed so that I may live your mission everyday. Amen.”

⁵ stories4homilies.blogspot.com