

JANUARY 26, 2020
Sunday of the 3rd Week in OT
Matthew 4: 12-23

JESUS, THE GREAT LIGHT

Today, the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary, Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter, *Motu proprio Aperuit illis*, published on 30 September, establishes that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God. The timing of the document is significant: 30 September is the Feast of Saint Jerome, the man who translated most of the Bible into Latin, and who famously said: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ". This year also marks 1600 years since his death. The title of the document, *Aperuit illis*, is equally important. They are its opening words, taken from St Luke's Gospel, where the Evangelist describes how the Risen Jesus appeared to His disciples, and how 'He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures'. This celebration has 'ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity'.¹ Christ Jesus is knocking at our door in the words of Sacred Scripture. Pope Francis further assessed: "If we hear his voice and open the doors of our minds and hearts, then He will enter our lives and remain ever with us."² This will be our challenge: live the Word of God today and every day.

Let us now reflect on the Word of God in our readings today. In the Sacred Scriptures, the image of light and darkness are symbols for good and evil. In our First Reading from the Prophet Isaiah, he described that the people will see the light that they are waiting for: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined."³ This was also echo in our

¹ www.vaticannews.va

² cal-catholic.com

³ Isaiah 9: 2 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

Gospel Reading for today. Both readings, Jesus is presented as the Great Light, the One who removed the darkness of sin from the world through the Cross and His blood. The prophecy of Prophet Isaiah is now fulfilled in Jesus who brings the Good News, the light and truth of the Gospel to the world.

My sisters and brothers, this is the Good News that Jesus proclaimed, and we are now task to proclaim it to all nations, to all people, everywhere. This Good News brings to us peace, harmony, hope, truth and redemption that we needed which Christ gave us and continue giving us.

“Jesus takes up John's message of repentance and calls his hearers to believe in the Good News he has come to deliver. What is the Good News which Jesus brings? It is the Good News of Peace - the Lord comes to reconcile and restore us to friendship with God. The Good News of Hope - the Lord comes to dwell with us and to give us a home with Him in His heavenly kingdom. The Good News of Truth - the Lord Jesus sets us free from the lies and deception of Satan and opens our mind to understand the truth and revelation of God's word (John 8:32). The Good News of Promise - Jesus fulfills the promise of God to reward those who seek him with the treasure of heaven. The Good News of Immortality - Jesus overcomes sin and death for us in order to raise our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body which will never die again. And the Good News of Salvation - the Lord Jesus delivers us from every fear, every sin, and every obstacle that would keep us from entering His everlasting kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. The Gospel is the power and the wisdom of God - both powers to change and transform our lives and wisdom to show us how to live as sons and daughters of our Father in heaven.”⁴

⁴ dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org

The message of Jesus Christ is the same message St. John the Baptist proclaimed to all people: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”⁵ According to Pope Francis: “Without a repentant heart, Christians can risk living out their faith superficially and fail to live out God's desire for mercy, not sacrifice. Instead, Jesus' love for sinners shows that the church is not a community of perfect people, but disciples on a path who follow the Lord because they recognize themselves as sinners and in need of his forgiveness. Jesus' mission is to search for each one of us, to heal our wounds and call us to follow Him with love. There is no saint without a past and there is no sinner without a future. This is beautiful; this is what Jesus does.”⁶

My sisters and brothers, Jesus Christ is calling us for a change of heart, a change of lifestyle, a change of direction in our lives. It is not just to be sorry for our past sins and avoid it in the near future. Repentance is a ‘metanoia’, a radical change in one’s heart. Let us keep on repenting, an ongoing lifestyle of the people who belongs to the Kingdom of God, the first teaching of Jesus as we heard in our gospel today.

So how do we say sorry for our sins? Do we say sorry to our parents when we don’t obey them and we are busy with our mobile legend, our Facebook, our games? Do you say sorry to your wife or husband when you are at fault, when you yell at him or her, and when you don’t understand them especially when your wife or husband are so tired after work? Do we say sorry to God when we are lazy to go to mass or pray? Let us ask the Lord in this Eucharist that we may have a change of heart, have a courage to say sorry to Him, to our family and to those people around us. May the Lord give us the strength to continue repenting for our sins and try our best to avoid all these things in the future. But don’t be discourage when we fall again and when we sin again. The Lord is always willing

⁵ Matthew 4: 17 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

⁶ www.catholicnews.com

to accept us, love us, forgive us and embrace us. Just go to Him and without questions He will say to us "I love you and I forgive you." Likewise, let us do this to others: forgive and love them. Live the Word of God by example.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Great Light amidst the darkness in my life. May your word penetrate my heart and transform my mind that I may see your love, forgiveness, guidance, power and glory. Help me to choose your ways and to do what is pleasing to you every day of my life. May I also forgive other people and love them as you forgive and love me. Amen."