

JULY 11, 2020
Memorial of St. Benedict, Abbot
Matthew 10: 24-33

“NO BETTER TREATMENT.”

Yesterday, the gospel reminded us that to follow Jesus, we need to be ready to be persecuted, ridiculed, and accused of anything to be discouraged and abandon our faith. Now, Jesus is telling us that if He was treated this way, His own followers can expect no better treatment. If He was called the Prince of Devils, how much more those of His disciples, His own family of believers. All His life, much of His teaching was done silently and calmly and always away from the crowds. He even admonished both the people He cured and demons not to speak about Him. Most of the time, Jesus was doing things quietly, without fanfare, no recognition but with love and compassion. Amidst persecutions, His disciples must be firm to his faith and ready to face even death itself.

In the course of history of our faith, “some of those who proclaim the Gospel are going to be threatened even with losing their lives, a fact that is testified to by a long list of martyrs (martyr = witness) over the centuries. Jesus is saying that physical death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person. It is a reality we are all going to have to face sooner or later anyway. Far worse than physical death is the “loss of one’s soul”, that is, the death of one’s integrity. There are some values which transcend our physical survival. To betray such a value in order to live a bit longer is to lose one’s soul.”¹

Let us look on the life of St. Benedict, the feast we celebrate today. He is the Father of Western Monasticism, “the way of life, characterized by asceticism and self-denial, followed by religious who live more or less secluded from the world, according to fixed rule and under vows, in order to praise God through contemplation and apostolic

¹ <https://livingspace.sacredspace.ie>

charity.”² St. Benedict lived a life of humility, faithfulness, and charity in a monastery. His Monastic Rule “is marked by moderation, balance and humanity. Community was a key feature of his monastic vision and he stressed the value of community life as a school for holiness. He saw the community as a place of equality where each person was helped by everyone else along the path of holiness. The monk’s primary occupation was liturgical prayer, complemented by the reading of the Scriptures and manual work of various kinds. He is a living example of that image of the grain of wheat which when planted in the ground dies but in dying bears much fruit.”³

My brothers and sisters, our gospel and St. Benedict is reminding us that when we give kindly, we receive more than we give because we are more important than sparrows, we are loved by the Lord more than anything. We just need to acknowledge Him, be faithful and loyal to Him and even though we may, as He Himself did, lose our lives, He will be with us today and for ever. May St. Benedict, pray for us. Amen.

² www.catholicculture.org/

³ www.catholicsermons.com