

MARCH 5, 2022
Saturday after Ash Wednesday
Isaiah 58: 9b-14; Luke 5: 27-32

“CALLING OF SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.”

Change to be authentic, it must not be found only in words or thoughts but more on the heart and action. The season of Lent is a season of change extending to all seasons throughout one's life. The change of heart we make today will be the first step towards change for tomorrow. We can not say I will change tomorrow but we need to say I will start today. Maybe tomorrow will not come. For Prophet Isaiah as the Lord said, change is NOW: “If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”¹ The Lord will hear our prayers but there are conditions. We must get rid of oppressions, hatred, bad speech and words, complaint, and do charity by sharing to the hungry and afflicted our bread and comfort. This is a season and time to reflect on the direction and meaning of our lives, to change things that are not helpful and try to maintain the changes for life.

Jesus recognized that change to Levi or Matthew from the very beginning He called him. He was a tax collector, hated by all because of their greediness. But Jesus saw in different angle, Levi is a good man, and through Jesus' guidance and love, Levi became a great follower, an Apostle of Christ. Because Levi saw in Jesus the love and trust amidst his sinfulness and nothingness, he threw a party, maybe a farewell party for 'his friends who were considered as sinners too.' Pharisees and scribes looked at this as non-acceptable because Jesus eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners and concluded Jesus is a sinner too. Jesus answered: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”²

¹ Isaiah 58: 9b-10 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

² Luke 5: 31-32 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

We can read the words of Jesus in two ways: “On the one hand, there is no need to preach to the converted. Which is what we do a lot of in our Christian churches. What is needed is to reach out to those who are lost, whose lives are going in the wrong direction, who are leading a self-destructive existence. And surely that is what the Church needs to be about today. There is a lot of the Pharisee among us still. We are still shocked if we see a priest or a ‘good’ Catholic in ‘bad’ company and often jump to hasty and unjustified conclusions. ‘A priest/sister should not be seen in such company.’ As a result, the Church is in many cases very much confined to the church-going fringes of society. Jesus’ words can also be taken in a sarcastic sense. His critics regarded themselves as among the well and virtuous. In fact, they totally lacked the love and compassion of God reflected in Jesus. Their ‘virtue’ did not need Jesus because they were closed to him anyway. We remember the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the temple. It was the one who acknowledged himself as a sinner and wanted God’s mercy who won God’s favour.”³

My brothers and sisters, we are being reminded that we must not judge others by what we see as if we have a high moral standard, see only the faults of others, and look at others with conclusion, they are sinners and bad people. We are all sinners and need healing like those people we judged and condemned. So, as sinners, let us pray for ourselves for healing and those who are lost, misguided and for those leaders who need love and enlightenment and be reconciled to one another so that we may experience peace in every country, families, and communities. Let us ask the intercession of Our Lady, the Queen of Peace that peace may reign in our hearts and in the world. Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us.

³ livingspace.sacredspace.ie