

OCTOBER 15, 2020
Memorial of St. Teresa of Jesus, Virgin & Doctor of the Church
Luke 11: 47-54

“BE AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD.”

There are two essential themes for our readings today: the richness of God’s grace we received and the challenge to bring other people closer to God not away from God. “We will be reading for the next weeks from the letter to the Ephesians. It is a very beautiful letter, both in its richness of language and its message. It was not written by Paul himself, but written under his name by one of his disciples after Paul died, as a final summary of his message. We have read the opening verses, which are a prayer of blessing, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ God is praised for all that we have received. It mentions the richness of God’s grace that has been showered on us through Christ. We know all about showers in this climate. The next time we are tempted to complain about rain, we might think of that expression, ‘the richness of grace showered upon us.’ Through the life-giving blood of Christ, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins. In return, we are moved ‘to praise the glory of God’s grace’, which we do in the Eucharist and every time we pause to pray. Having been showered with grace, we give thanks and try to live under that influence.”¹ Whatever blessings we have, small or big one, we need to thank the Lord because the more we give thanks, the more we are blessed. Even things we consider burden, problems, and difficulties, it is us who can gain from these: we learn, we can become ready to face other challenges, and most of all, we are being strengthened by these experiences.

In our gospel, we are being reminded that we must bring people closer to God not away from God. We must be example for others to imitate. Jesus and the Scribes were always in conflict because of different ideologies and interpretations of the Law and the Prophets. The Scribes interpreted it according to their own advantage and benefit. This is the reason why Jesus were always at odd with them. Jesus promoted the well-being of the person not for His own

¹ www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie

advantage. He always at the side of sinners, outcasted and people who were open to His teachings. He welcomed those who were willing to be healed and had an open hearts and minds to God. The Scribes and Pharisees only think of themselves, pass on heavy burdens to people and instead of helping them, they overloaded them with unnecessary teachings and laws. They don't want the people to be closer to God but away from God by imposing burdens and heavy loads. They don't even lift a finger to help those who are in need and take advantage of people under their care.

Let us look on the life of St. Teresa of Avila. "She entered the Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation in Avila in 1535 and the next year she came down with a serious illness that persisted for two years followed by partial paralysis for another. The doctors had given up on her. She turned to prayer and recovered. The convent in Avila was affluent and the nuns enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. It was close to town, the sisters received many guests, and they were caught up in the ways of the world. She went through a dramatic conversion. She prayed before a crucifix and later wrote, "When I looked at Christ hanging poor and naked on the Cross, I felt I could never bear to be rich." There were divine revelations from God. She received visions from St. Mary Magdalene and St. Augustine, both who showed her the miserable place in hell that was reserved for her. Fearing hell for herself, she set out to save her soul, as well as the souls of her fellow Carmelites. She returned to the full observance of the Carmelite rule, a strict cloister, more prayer and contemplation, penitential practices, and rigorous austerity."² According to her: "Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes with which Christ looks out his compassion to the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now."³

So, my brothers and sisters, let us ask the intercession of St. Teresa of Jesus to be always thankful for the blessings God gave us, bring others closer to God and do the mission God entrusted to by being His feet, eyes, hands for others.

² www.catholichotdish.com

³ www.azquotes.com/author/19882-Teresa_of_Avila