

Commentary on the Readings for February 26, 2017

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

I am sure that at some time or other in your life you have been at what is often called "wits end" where nothing seems to come together to fulfill a need. It can be as simple as "what to fix for dinner" or perhaps "what should I wear" to a special gathering in order to be dressed appropriately. Or it might be more complex as to how to motivate your son or daughter to do better in school knowing that he or she has the ability but it is not applying it. These are the times when we need to turn to God in prayer and ask for His help in solving our problems. He is waiting for us to ask. The readings for the 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time are all about **trust in God**, not wishful thinking, but a trust that is born of faith and your relationship with God. Again, He is waiting there for you to ask for His help. Let us see how the readings bring this out:

The **First Reading** is from the *Prophet Isaiah (49:14-15)*. In the earlier part of this Chapter, in the writings of Isaiah, we learn that the Exiles have returned from Babylon only to find their city and all that they had left behind in ruins or non-existent. The despair was obvious and widespread. However, Isaiah tries to encourage the people by reminding them that the God of Israel was always there waiting for them as a mother waits for her child coming home from school. He then goes further and says, *"Even if she should forget, Your God will never forget you."*

The **Responsorial Psalm (62:2-9)** is a beautiful prayer that supports this entire concept of "trusting in the Lord." The opening line is one that St. Augustine used in his great writing called *The City of God*. There Augustine says, *"My soul is restless until it rests in thee, my God."* Anyone who experiences stress or frustration should read this psalm to see a tried-and-true resolution.

The **Second Reading** is from St. Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians (4:1-5)*. In turning to the Lord for all decisions and actions, we might feel uncomfortable about what our family or friends might think about our "being so religious." In this passage, St. Paul tells us that we should not be concerned nor influenced about what others think of us because, when we are one with the Lord in our mind and heart and our actions reflect this "oneness," then we have the best of both this world and the next. Then, when our family and friends see the positive results, *"everyone will receive praise from God."*

The **Gospel Reading** is from the *Gospel of Matthew (6:24-34)*. This is a continuation of the great **Sermon on the Mount**. In this passage Matthew, or Jesus, who is speaking, might be giving advice that sounds too good to be true. Obviously, we must be concerned about where our food and clothing and other necessities come from; but what Jesus is saying is that to let our concerns go beyond reasonable levels to where we become angry or lose hope and fall into despair is not trusting in God. Therefore, take your unmanageable concerns to Him in prayer and see the results. Something to think about during your Prayer Time this week! MFB