

Third Sunday of the Year – January 26, 2020

Isaiah 8:23- 9:3 1 Corinthians 1: 10-13, 17 Matthew 4: 12-23

Being able to communicate is one of the essentials of life. In speaking, listening, signing, absorbing what is being communicated and reaching out in response – all of these are so much a part of life. This is not only the case among humans. Those who study various species of animals tell us that, in various different ways, they communicate as well.

We have been called upon this weekend by Pope Francis, to spend these moments of worship today with a sense of gratitude as well as reflection and prayer for the fact that our loving God is not distant and remote, but truly intimate in relationship to us. Our loving God seeks to communicate with us. Communication, indeed, was basic to the effort of Jesus as he sought to reveal our God to us. That revelation of God is found in the Scriptures, what is known as the Word of God.”

It is through the “Word of God”, God speaking to us, that we hear, at least weekly, that we learn of God acting on behalf of the “Chosen People” of old. We hear, as well, the call of “God-with-us”, Jesus Christ, to join with him and, in a particular way, to follow him. We also listen as early members of this Body of Christ, the Church, that we also are, struggle and succeed in the effort to achieve what is called for in being followers of Christ, true images of our God.

What we heard in the Gospel passage which was read today provides a good example. In St. Matthew's account Jesus is undertaking his ministry of revealing God. He does this, not in the center of Jewish tradition and practice, Jerusalem, but in Galilee, the land of the Gentile and foreigners, a land of darkness. This is a reminder to us that in whatever the circumstances or darkness, he is the source of light, he enlightens our lives. Then he gathers his followers – ordinary people – who will share his efforts so that we might know that all of us are called to be part of his work. He does not work in isolation, but with and through and in all of us.

What we heard today, as we do each week, or each time we read the Scriptures, is a communication of God to us that addresses us and challenges us today. No matter who or what any one of us might be today, we can be touched, we can be affected, we can be enlightened by God's word to us now. Through the routine of daily life what we are, as the Body of Christ today, is to continue to be a means that seeks to reveal the light of God's presence with us each day, the light of God's willingness to lift us up so that we can realize our potential, a light of God's effort to join us and nourish us when we are here, gathered in worship.

If we open ourselves to the full effect of God's communication with us, to the Word of God spoken to us in the Scriptures and especially in the teachings of Christ, then we learn that the greatest desires of what we want in life are found in our relationship with God our Creator. We learn that the means to achieve the very best of what we want in life is found in our relationship with God who is with us and who speaks to us. We learn that what is required to achieve this very best is found in our relationship with God and with living from day to day what we are as reflections of our good and gracious God.