

CHRIST GIVES US REST FOR OUR SOULS

Fr. Steven Scherrer, MM, ThD

Homily of Thursday, 15th Week of the Year, July 14, 2011
Exod. 3:13-20, Ps. 104, Matt. 11:28-30

“Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

Jesus Christ is the only Son of the Father, sent by him into the world to save us from our sins and give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who gives us a participation in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) with God’s life flowing through us (John 7:37-39). Christ then sent his apostles into the world to continue and extend in history his own mission of salvation through faith in him. His apostles are his Church which continues the mission of the Son in the world, which is to preach that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ there is repentance and the forgiveness of sins and a new life in God with all our guilt removed (Acts 5:31). This mission will continue until Christ returns in glory. It is necessary that all people groups, cultures, and languages hear the proclamation of this good news of salvation and have the opportunity to believe in Christ for their salvation. The Church must always proclaim in all places and in every language that Christ, the only Son of God, died for our sins to free us from them, so that we could live in the freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:23). This is the essence of the mission of the Church.

This mission of the Church gives rest for our souls. It gives relief to those who are heavy laden and burdened. It brings good news, the gospel of salvation and happiness. All this comes to us through the cross of Christ. Moreover we ourselves are to bear this yoke of the cross (Luke 9:23), sacrificing ourselves in love and self-gift to God. By renouncing all things to live for God alone with all our heart, we bear the yoke of the cross and discover that it is easy and light, and that it gives rest to our souls. So it is, for in seeking our happiness only in God, all the love of our heart goes exclusively and directly to him; and we dedicate ourselves to love our neighbor and the whole world with the love of God in our heart, serving others, especially by sharing with them the good news, the gospel of the salvation of God, given to the world in Jesus Christ.

In the first reading, God reveals his name to Moses and tells him that he wants to free his people from their affliction in Egypt, make them his special and chosen people in the desert, and give them the promised land. Then God would

continue revealing himself to Israel, his people, preparing them for their Messiah and Savior, Jesus Christ. We can never reduce this salvation of his people and the fullness of salvation in Jesus Christ to mere social and economic progress or to merely opposing political and economic oppression. The essence of the gospel that we preach is always that Christ died to save us from our sins, suffering their punishment for us on the cross. We are to proclaim this to the ends of the earth, to all peoples (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48) until Christ returns in glory. We are to preach this to convert all we can, baptizing and teaching them (Matt. 28:19-20), and planting the Church in every people group, language, and culture. This is the mission of the Church.