

Sisters and Brothers, let us put our confidence in Our Lord! 07/02/2023

### Covenant Life

- Our next Gathering is **NEXT Sunday, July 9,** at 3pm. Please join us!
- *Exciting news: We are restarting **Children's Ministry** in July. Cecilia Briseno has graciously offered to organize a ministry for our little ones during our Gatherings that will enable them to have some special time together during Word Gift time. Please help spread the word to all young families!*
- **SAVE THE DATE** - we are planning our next **Meet and Greet** for new families after the Gathering on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Current plan is to have a hotdog meal in Micheal Hall and then visiting while the children play in the gym.
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary content is available on our [Jubilee web page](#); past prayer meeting audio is [here](#), Word Gift summaries are [here](#), and transcripts are [here](#).
- Your ongoing financial support to the Community is sincerely appreciated. Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, Tx 75222.

As we enter into the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday and Celebration, freedom comes to mind. Of course, our forefathers fought for freedom, and we have been enjoying the fruits of their efforts for almost 250 years. But what is freedom? Merriam Webster has one definition that is: "Liberation from slavery or restraint or the power of another."

The readings today help us to understand this much better. So many times, we view freedom as the ability to do what we want to do. Unfortunately, that usually means focusing on our wants, our needs. But true freedom focuses on others, not on ourselves. In the First Reading

from Second Kings (4:8-11, 14-16a), there is a wonderful cycle where the woman of influence is concerned about Elisha and his needs and provides for them whenever he is around. She first feeds him and socializes with him, dining with him. Next, she and her husband provide lodging for Elisha, giving comfort and assuring he has a place to rest. Elisha then asks; "Can something be done for her?" When told that she had no son, Elisha prophesies that next year she will "be fondling a baby son." Love (being concerned for another) is the result of freedom, of being made and acting in the image of God. It creates a communion, where love is given, received, given back, and amplified in the process. It is the result of true freedom.

The Responsorial Psalm sings that "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord". Of course, He is our end goal. Union with Him is the purpose of our lives and is what we all desire. How do we get there?

The Second Reading from Romans 6 gives a good formula. We must "die with Christ", and then be raised to "live with Him". This doesn't seem very attractive at first, but further St. Paul explains that Christ "died to sin once and for all; as to His life, he lives for God". Therefore, we should be dedicated and passionate about dying to sin, about rooting out even the smallest sin in our lives.

The Gospel message (Matthew 10: 37-42) confirms this. I've always scratched my head when Jesus says "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.....". However, when we look deeper, our primary love must be for God and His goodness. If we put love of other humans before Him, we will always fall back into sin, which is of course anything counter to God. If we "find our life" (if we seek what we want for ourselves), we will lose our lives. However, if we lose our lives for His sake (seek only God), we will find our lives and live in the freedom of God.

How is this practical? If you are like me, you tend to confess the same sins over and over. I claim I can give my sins numbers instead of naming them. Our priest gave a wonderful homily today about rooting out sin. If you, like me, can give them a number, we can start with the first one and dedicate ourselves to dying to that sin. In order to do this:

1. Write the sin down. Also write down all the excuses for it, all the reasons we can conceive for doing it.
2. Write down what draws us to this sin. When do we first start considering it? What are the "near occasions" of that sin?
3. Find someone we can share with about this sin, and do this in person and vocally. This can be a priest, a confessor, a spiritual Director, or a spiritual friend. Likely it should not be a spouse.
4. Take our two lists of the sin and the near occasions to confession and allow the Lord to heal us.

As we celebrate Freedom this Fourth of July, let us embrace true Freedom, and no longer be slaves to sin.

*Let us Pray: Oh Jesus, please show us how to die with you. Draw us to you and allow us to live fully in you. Please break the bonds of sin and let us live in the freedom that you and the Father originally planned for us. We love you.*

Blessings to Each of You

Bob Montgomery