

Newsletter Reflection
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

After last week's celebration of All Saints, we are back to normal today, although perhaps looking forward to Christ the King or the start of Advent. Still, we shouldn't underestimate what ordinary Sundays have to offer. This Sunday's reading from the Letter to the Hebrews beautifully describes the most crucial part of our faith: Jesus has done away with sin by sacrificing himself for us.

To really appreciate this, we need to start with the uncomfortable topic of sin, the wrong-doing which separates us from God. A brief glance at the news is enough to convince anyone that humans do plenty of bad things. Admittedly, what society sees as wrong does not overlap exactly with what separates us from God, but many things do. Murder, defrauding an employer or worker, or neglecting to care for the planet which is our common home, to pick a few obvious ones. If we are honest with ourselves, we can also identify more subtle sins in our own lives: pride, envy, gluttony, or lust, for example. This is not a cause for despair though. The Gospel message is to repent because the kingdom of God is at hand. God has sent us his Son, so that we can turn away from sin and back to him. We do this by acknowledging to God we have done wrong, that we are sorry, and resolving to stop sinning. Christ instituted Confession, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so that this would be easier for us to do. It is a Sacrament of Healing which we should avail ourselves of frequently in our struggles, because God offers it to help us. By admitting our sins out loud and hearing the words of absolution, we receive forgiveness and we know that we are forgiven.

This turning away from sin and back to God is a constant part of the Christian life, and certainly a constant part of my life. I fail with monotonous regularity. Occasionally, I manage to kick one sinful habit, but just as often I think I acquire new ones. Like everyone else, I have to keep turning back to Jesus. The reason is simple: Jesus died for my sins, for your sins, and the sins of all humanity. He sacrificed himself to save you, me and every human who will ever live. That big crucifix hanging in our cathedral church is there as a reminder of this reality. Jesus loved us enough to die to save us. This is what we mean when we talk about salvation and our saviour. It is the Good News of the Gospel.

As we look ahead to the feast of Christ the King and the coming of Christ at Christmas, our reading from Hebrews reminds us that when Christ comes again it will be "to reward with salvation those who are waiting for him." Let us keep our eyes and hearts fixed on Him, so that when we meet him, we are ready.

Your fellow penitent,

Eddie