

December 2019

Proclaim the message

be persistent, whether the time is favourable or unfavourable... (2 Tim 4:2)

Reflection:

Faith is not a theory, a philosophy, an idea; it is an encounter. An encounter with Jesus! (Pope Benedict XVI). Whether that encounter is a forceful one like St. Paul's or a sober and soul piercing one like the Samaritan woman, the fruit of it always ignites a transformation. This encounter "takes us out of ourselves, lifts us up and overwhelms us with God's love and beauty" (Christus Vivit). The spontaneous response of the Samaritan woman to reach out to the same villagers that she shunned earlier reveals to us the change that encounter brought about in her. The fruit of her humble proclamation in bringing a whole village to an encounter with Jesus reveals the power and potential of evangelization that is the result of a heart kissed by the mercy of God.

"The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life" (Prov 10:11). The apostles spoke of their encounters with the risen Christ, which refreshed and nourished the hearts of their listeners like a fountain that brings forth life and joy. Perhaps the best example of an intimate proclamation is that of Philip and the Ethiopian. Philip used the passage from Isaiah that the Ethiopian was reading to explain that Jesus was the Son of God and salvation is obtained through him (cf Acts 8:35). Another powerful instance is between Paul and the jailor. Paul used the circumstances surrounding the extraordinary manifestation of the power of God to proclaim the kerygma and bring the jailor to salvation (cf. Acts 16:31-33). Emboldened by the Holy Spirit, Christ's disciples have fearlessly testified before friends and foes, rulers and slaves, rich and poor, whenever and wherever – even at the cost of persecution and death. Such spirit filled proclamation emanating in charity arouses a true encounter in the hearts of listeners who are open. "For there is a road from the eye to the heart that does not go through the intellect" (G.K. Chesterton).

The Church teaches that proclamation is the foundation, centre, and summit of evangelization (see. EN 27). It is not an activity to which we are called to engage temporarily and periodically. It is joining in the heart of God "who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). But "how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Rom 10:14). "Through the working of the Spirit, there already exists in individuals and peoples an expectation, even if an unconscious one, of knowing the truth about God, about man, and about how we are to be set free from sin and death. The missionary's enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ comes from the conviction that he is responding to that expectation" (Evangelii Gaudium 265). Proclaiming the Gospel in any circumstance means believing that the sincere and constant proclamation of the Word saves, despite difficulties and failures, and satisfies to the deepest needs and most universal concerns of the human heart.

What will you do today that will matter one hundred years from now? You and I will be dead. The kind of house you lived in or the kind of car you drove will not matter at all. But the souls you touched in this life and helped bring back to God will matter a lot. (Terry Barber, How to Share Your Faith with Anyone, pg 77)

There are a few people in the world with whom only you can share Christ. Can you respond to His call and start with them? May the love of Christ urge you on. And love will find a way. And it will never give up.

Saint Quote:

"Proclaim the truth and do not be silent through fear." - St. Catherine of Sienna

