

2018.08.26

## Sunday Homily 21-B6 by Fr. Gabor

In the past couple of weeks the readings directed our attention to the nourishment, especially the Eucharist that we receive for our life journey towards Heaven. The Eucharistic is also the most precious sign of God's loving commitment to us. Through it He tells us that He wants to be with us and invites us to commit ourselves to Him and be one with Him.

So today's readings, make us reflect on OUR commitment to Him both directly and through our commitment to one another.

The Old Testament reading was written in the context of the new life of the Jewish people in the Promised Land. On arrival there they suddenly found themselves surrounded by pagans who worshipped false gods. To their situation sounds like our situation in a society where Christians feel being surrounded by people who worship false gods such as spending money, gaining influence, control over others, consuming unhealthy amount of alcohol, drugs, addicted to physical pleasures, or shopping more and etc. Joshua, the leader of the Jewish people is close to death, so before his departure he encourages his people to make a stand and recommit themselves to the Lord God of Israel, the only true God, and ignore the false gods of the surrounding pagan society. He encourages them to do so by reminding them of all the wonderful things the Lord God has done for them. This tells me how important it is to recall the blessings that we have received from the Lord and then renew our commitment to Him. I am sure if we are honest all of us can remember some signs of the Lord's goodness to each one of us: perhaps you prayed for someone who was healed, or for a baby, which eventually was granted to you, or the husband or wife that you eventually received, or the peace that you enjoy every day. This is also a good opportunity to recall those blessings that you have received through the Church, such as your faith, hope, charity and knowledge of the love of the living God, healing, good moral standards, some friends, spiritual strength and stamina, encouragement, prayerful help when you faced difficult times.

In the second reading St. Paul reminds us of the commitment of husbands and wives to one another. This is another, very important form of commitment to God, and in particular to the Lord Jesus. St. Paul says: 'Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the

Lord...Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her...' Christian marriage is one of the most important commitments both to another human being and to the Lord. This is why it is so important that married couples renew their marriage vows, or commitments, every year, so today at the end of Mass I would like to bless those couples whose wedding anniversary was in July and August.

Then in the Gospel reading the Lord Jesus challenges His disciples to make a commitment to follow Him. We see two different responses to Jesus' words about eating His Body and drinking His blood: rejection and commitment. What makes such a big difference is not how much you know Jesus, but what your attitude is towards Him in general: whether you believe or not, ie. whether you believe His words, even when they are challenging or reject them. If you look deeper into the reading you will realise that Jesus' words must have sounded just as challenging or difficult both to those who left Him and to those who stayed with Him, like the apostles, because the apostles also disapproved the idea of eating a human being's flesh and drinking his blood, but they trusted and believed in Jesus' words. They don't say, we will eat your Body and drink your Blood, but they said: 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe.' This is enough sign of a commitment to the Lord in difficult situations such as the one in the Gospel reading.

Commitment is not about picking and choosing only what we like, but about faith and trust, just like marriage commitment is not only for good times, but also for difficult times. Our Christian life is also for good times and for bad times when we struggle to accept what Jesus teaches us through the Church, His body, but if we keep trusting and believing in God and even in each other in difficult times, we will see fruits, very positive fruits. The Lord will bless us, our life, our marriages, our friendships, our communities, our Churches and eventually our society. 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life and we believe!'