

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

Saturday, September 12, 2020

-- Saturday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

First Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

My beloved ones, avoid idolatry. I am speaking as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I am saying. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the Blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one Body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Look at Israel according to the flesh; are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? So what am I saying? That meat sacrificed to idols is anything? Or that an idol is anything? No, I mean that what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to become participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealous anger? Are we stronger than him?

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 116:12-13, 17-18

To you, Lord, I will offer a sacrifice of praise.

How shall I make a return to the Lord
for all the good he has done for me?

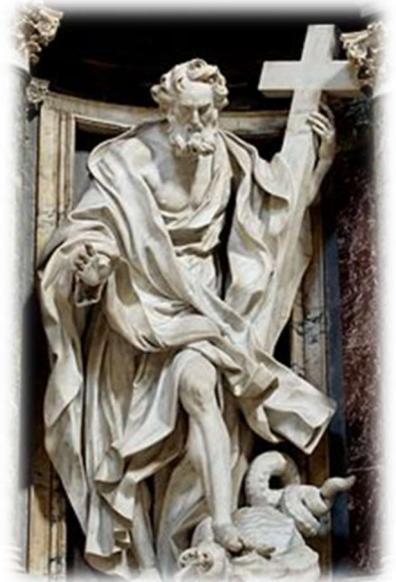
The cup of salvation I will take up,
and I will call upon the name of the Lord. ***R/.***

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

My vows to the Lord I will pay
in the presence of all his people. ***R/.***

Gospel: Luke 6:43-49

Jesus said to his disciples: "A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.



“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but not do what I command? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when the flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built. But the one who listens and does not act is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, it collapsed at once and was completely destroyed.”

Reflection

Avoid idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14)

Why was Paul warning the Corinthians about idolatry? It helps to consider the context of this passage. A controversy existed within the community about whether Christians were allowed to eat meat that had been sacrificed to pagan gods. The problem was that most of the meat available on the market had already been subject to these religious ceremonies. Earlier in his letter, Paul argued that Christians could eat such meat as long as it didn't scandalize or weaken the consciences of their fellow Christians (1 Corinthians 8:4-13). But it seems that some in the community may have actually been participating in these sacrifices as well as eating the “consecrated” meat.

How could they do such a thing, Paul asks, and still come together to share communion and receive the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16)? Paul understood that when we sacrifice to anything, we are “connecting” ourselves to that person or thing; we are establishing a kind of communion with them. But communion with Christ is exclusive. We can't be connected to anything else at the same time.

Whenever we invest an inordinate amount of our time, energy, or resources in pursuing things other than God, we are in effect sacrificing to them. We are in some way sharing communion with them. We may even be giving the evil one a foothold in our lives (1 Corinthians 10:20). After all, what better strategy could Satan use than to keep our focus off of God?

Of course, just because something isn't directly God centered doesn't mean it will become an idol. We just don't want anything — whether that be the pursuit of a career, material things, or a favorite pastime — to become a driving force in our lives.

As Christians, we want to invest ourselves in what will keep us close to Christ. Because in the end, anything else will prove dissatisfying to us. Nothing can give us what only God stands ready to give: hope that does not disappoint, deep-down joy, and love that is beyond our comprehension.

Jesus, help me always to stay firmly connected to you.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.

Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,

O Prince of the heavenly hosts,

by the power of God,

thrust into hell Satan,

and all the evil spirits,

who prowl about the world

seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.