

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church



Saturday, January 9, 2021

First Reading: 1 John 5:14-21

Beloved: We have this confidence in him that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that what we have asked him for is ours. If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not deadly.

We know that anyone begotten by God does not sin; but the one begotten by God he protects, and the Evil One cannot touch him. We know that we belong to God, and the whole world is under the power of the Evil One. We also know that the Son of God has come and has given us discernment to know the one who is true. And we are in the one who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Children, be on your guard against idols.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 149:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 9

The Lord takes delight in his people.

Sing to the Lord a new song
of praise in the assembly of the faithful.
Let Israel be glad in their maker,
let the children of Zion rejoice in their king. *R/.*

Let them praise his name in the festive dance,
let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.
For the Lord loves his people,
and he adorns the lowly with victory. *R/.*

Let the faithful exult in glory;
let them sing for joy upon their couches;
Let the high praises of God be in their throats.
This is the glory of all his faithful. Alleluia. *R/.*

Gospel: John 3:22-30

Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing. John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was an abundance of water there, and people came to be baptized, for John had not yet been imprisoned. Now a

dispute arose between the disciples of John and a Jew about ceremonial washings. So they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him.” John answered and said, “No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said that I am not the Christ, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease.”

Reflection

Children, be on your guard against idols. (1 John 5:21)

Think about how close the apostle John was to Jesus. He lived with Jesus and ministered with him for three years. He was front and center for all of Jesus’ teachings. He sat beside him at the Last Supper (John 13:23). He stood beneath the cross on Calvary (19:26). He outran Peter and was the first to enter the empty tomb and believe (20:4, 8). John was convinced without a doubt that Jesus was the Son of God.

Perhaps that’s why he ends his first letter with a warning about idols. Some people had left the Church, saying that Jesus wasn’t divine. John knew that this wrong thinking could lead other people astray, even to the point of worshipping idols. Still, he didn’t write much about idolatry. It’s not that he didn’t care about it. Rather, he was more concerned with pointing people toward the “true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

Even though we live in different times, we too need to be wary of idols. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with enjoying blessings like possessions or recreation or a career. In fact, these are gifts from God. Yet it’s a matter of priorities. When even good things become too important, they can take our eyes off the Lord.

How do we identify an idol? Think about where you look for happiness. Maybe you notice that you are trying to find it in something other than God. Or think about where you make sacrifices. If you’re giving too much of your attention, affection, money, or time to something, there’s a good chance you have crossed the line. Or where do you turn when you’re stressed? To Jesus or to something else?

If you recognize any idols in your life, consider their worth next to the boundless love of Jesus. He alone can fulfill your deepest needs. The more you are attached to him, as John was, the less you will look to other things for your ultimate fulfillment. Jesus came to bring you life — not just fleeting pleasure, but eternal life now and in heaven (John 10:10). And nothing is worth more than that.

Lord, help me to hold fast to you above all things. You are all I need!

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.