

St. Philip the Apostle

Roman Catholic Church



Friday, September 9, 2022

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

-- Memorial of St. Peter Claver, Priest

First Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-27

Brothers and sisters: If I preach the Gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the Gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the Gospel.

Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the Gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 84:3, 4, 5-6, 12

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, mighty God!

My soul yearns and pines
for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh
cry out for the living God. *R/.*

Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest
in which she puts her young —
Your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my king and my God! *R/.*

Blessed they who dwell in your house!
continually they praise you.
Blessed the men whose strength you are!
their hearts are set upon the pilgrimage. *R/.*

For a sun and a shield is the Lord God;
grace and glory he bestows;

The Lord withholds no good thing
from those who walk in sincerity. *R/.*

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, mighty God!

Gospel: Luke 6:39-42

Jesus told his disciples a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye."

Reflection

Run so as to win. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

At the sound of the whistle, the runners are off like a shot. As they race down the road, one runner takes a commanding lead. He has terrific focus and is obviously well trained. The crowd hasn't seen anything like it.

But wait, what is he doing? He has stopped at the side of the road and is haggling with a police officer who is writing him a parking ticket. It's absurd! What runner would interrupt a big race to argue about parking rules? That's not the time to get distracted!

St. Paul draws on a similar racing analogy to teach the Corinthians about focusing on what is really important. They had been arguing over whether they could eat foods that had been sacrificed to idols. And here he uses the image of a runner to help reframe the question for them. He tells them to "Run so as to win" (1 Corinthians 9:24). In other words, stay focused on your goal. Maintain a single-minded dedication to winning the race of discipleship as brothers and sisters in the Lord, and don't get caught up in lesser issues.

By spending so much energy arguing over dietary issues, the Corinthians showed that they were missing the big picture of what the gospel was about. In the "race" of following the Lord, they were acting like that runner interrupting himself to argue about a parking ticket. In contrast, Paul says he is willing to "become all things to all, to save at least some" (1 Corinthians 9:19). He was willing to put aside his own preferences or rights because his overriding goal was to help the Corinthians remain united so that they could be a witness to the gospel.

What Paul is talking about is keeping side issues on the side and remaining focused on the main goal: proclaiming the gospel through the call to love one another. That's something we can work on too. It may not take too deep an examination of conscience to come up with one or two ways that we are getting sidetracked from that goal. But at the same time, it probably won't take a lot of pondering to figure out how to get back on track.

So keep running the race!

Lord, help me to keep my eyes fixed on loving you and loving the people in my life.

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.