

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Words mean different things in different contexts and when they are said by different people. If Grandma says, "Say your prayers," you think of it as a nice gesture. If a sketchy person in a back alley says, "Say your prayers," you might think something different. If the priest asks, "Have you been to Confession lately?" you think he is doing his job. If an airline stewardess asks, "Have you been to Confession lately?" I am sure it means something else. We say many words in the Mass. Why are they there?

Think of how we started Mass today: *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.* That is quite an impressive collection of people. Are they all necessary to enter in this journey? If someone said to you, "The strength of Superman, the technical genius of Batman and the regenerative powers of Wolverine be with you," you might wonder what kind of a journey you are embarking on. Is it really necessary that we started with asking the Trinity to be with us on this journey? And three other times we are going to ask the Lord to be with us - once before the Gospel, once before the Liturgy of the Eucharist and once as we prepare to leave. Those are impressive people to ask for help.

Then what do we do? We confess our sins. Hmm that is interesting. To get ready on this journey you need to confess your sins. Yet seven times throughout the Mass we are called to examine ourselves. Can you imagine if you were invited to a dinner and seven times you were asked to wash your hands? You might think either that is crazy or it is really important to be clean here. The truth is it is amazing that we are called to be here and the truth is we need God in order to keep the Gospel and today is one of those days where we will need Him to help us. Did you hear the Gospel reading? If you merely lust after someone, you will be judged as liable to hell. If you insult someone by calling them a fool, you will be judged as liable for hell. If you hate someone, you will be judged liable. If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. There is no cost we shouldn't pay to avoid sin because there is no way we can pay to make up for our sins. These are wild commands and these are the way to Heaven, an impossible way if the Lord is not with us. We cannot rise to these commands no matter how hard we try. We can only ask for the grace and forgiveness. But there is good news in this Gospel and that is with grace we can live these truths. The good news is we can live without lust, anger and the breaking of the Commandments. But it will only be done with the strength provided by Him. This is exactly why we need the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

In the First Reading, it says if you choose you can keep the commandments. When we say choose it is because the choice is that you and I decide to let God work in our hearts. That is the choice we make. We can hear the words of the Gospel and lose heart thinking that it is not possible. We may not know how God is going to make the changes in our heart but we don't have to know, all we need to do is ask for this and keep asking. It is God who saves us and gives us the strength to seek life when in our hearts we want to seek death or we feel we are too weak to choose life. But that is why we ask the Lord to be with us and to save us so we, too, can live the joy of the Gospel.