

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Father Ed's Homily

THEME: "SO BE IMITATORS OF GOD, AS BELOVED CHILDREN, AND LIVE IN LOVE..."

In today's second reading, St. Paul advises the early Christian community in Ephesus and all of us to be true imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love. He mentions some of the ways we can be imitators of God and his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, as follows; "ALL BITTERNESS, FURY, ANGER, SHOUTING, AND REVILING MUST BE REMOVED FROM YOU, ALONG WITH ALL MALICE. AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, COMPASSIONATE, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER AS GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU IN CHRIST."

In other words, let us love one another just as Christ loves us unconditionally. Fellow parishioners, if we live by Paul's advice, we truly will be imitators, children of God. Some of these human emotions Paul mentions for instance, anger and forgiveness are good only if we use them for the better glory of God and his Son, Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is one of the human emotions that is difficult to practice. You hear most people saying, "Not letting go is not helpful." They would admit that it is unhealthy not to forgive those who hurt them. One of the main reasons why it is very difficult to forgive someone is that most people who hurt you are your family members or loved ones, the very people you love and respect. To be able to forgive them, you must first admit the pain your family member/loved one caused you. You should also know the difference between forgiving and forgetting with regard to the harm/pain that they caused you. Then, you're on the road to being able to forgive and forget and heal from the pain. It may take time, which means you must practice the virtue of patience. There are times when you may need professional assistance. I personally think that even with a professional assistance, you need God's grace in some of the cases with regard to forgiving and forgetting the anger/pain your loved one did to you.

This is why you need Jesus, the Bread of Life, to help you in this regard. At the beginning of Mass, we acknowledge our sins and ask for God's forgiveness. In the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to "Forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us" (Luke 11:4). Then we're ready to receive the Holy Eucharist, the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life we have been hearing in John's Gospel for the past weeks and also next week's reading. The first reading gives us an example of a man of God who was an imitator of God, namely the prophet Elijah. Elijah was a very faithful prophet of God. In today's reading, he is fleeing for his life because Queen Jezebel wants to kill him for being a true prophet of God. Elijah felt he could not take it any longer. He prayed for death saying: "THIS IS ENOUGH, O LORD! TAKE MY LIFE, FOR I AM NO BETTER THAN MY FATHERS." Perhaps this experience of Elijah may remind you of what you or someone you knew went through. This past experience may help you to relate with Elijah and help those who may be going through a similar situation. As you may know, Elijah is the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. So, are you surprised he prayed for death? For me, I admire him. He admitted his humanness, his despair, his weakness, etc. and turned to God. God changed his prayer request for death to life, by feeding him and leading him to the Mountain. God saved his life.

Fellow parishioners, we serve a mighty God who will never abandon us if we turn to him. Today, we are blessed with many professional health care workers and other professional people that are there to address our needs. If we pray to God, he will certainly lead us to the right professional helpers that can address our needs. We must not feel shy about asking for assistance when we need it.

Again, if we truly love one another and follow Paul's advice in the second reading, we'll be imitators of God and his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Schools are reopening this week and next week. Please, let us pray for God's blessings upon the teachers, faculty members, and students for a successful academic year.

May Holy Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph, intercede for us to be true imitators of God and his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen