

Pentecost 12 Discipleship and Signs of the Times Luke (12:49-59)

The prophet John the Baptizer predicted that the one who was coming after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. The Christ at Luke 12:49-52 now talks about his own coming to bring fire on the earth and his wish that it should soon be kindled. The baptism that he has to endure is not one with water but the 'fire' of the soul in his Passion that is to come. "He came bringing peace", but here he says that he is not bringing peace but division. He who is called Prince of Peace threatens division. These divisions will divide people in families and smash relationships. The refrain and response used in the Stations of the Cross sets the scene very well: "We adore you O Christ and we bless you. For by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world." That redemption is offered to all of humanity, but those who choose to follow the Christ and those who reject him will unavoidably create their own divisions. Any exclusive focus excludes others, and that is one of the costs of discipleship. Jesus was realistic about the conflicts that would arise because of his ministry and its outcomes. He also seems to have been aware of the conflicts which could ensue for those people who left their homes and their livelihood in order to follow him. It would not require prophetic insight to know that their situation was probably going to get worse in the future within such an exclusive society and also outside among the many gods of the Gentiles.

Jesus of Nazareth was a master at totally engaging his present circumstances and entering them in such depth that he had sure expectations of the outcomes. This enabled him to give lasting counsel about future happenings in similar or even different contexts. The future was written into the present for the prophet-Messiah from Galilee. We have no knowledge of the future except by entering the next moment and turning it into the present. Our most profound assurance for the future is the presence in our lives of those who love us and permit us to love them. They are an essential part of our identity and they give content to our hopes and dreams. This why it is so devastating when we lose such a person, whether it is by the break-up of a relationship or death. They take part of our future with them, and we are shaken to the core. Financial planning is important, but we cannot plan for some things.

Jesus warns the crowd that their accuracy in forecasting the weather because of the signs on the skyline was not matched by their capacity to fully enter their present circumstances. It is easier to talk about tomorrow than to enter and fully participate in the realities of the present. Jesus tells the crowd that they know how to interpret the signs of the weather, but they do not know how to interpret the signs that God is writing into their history and thrusting before them right now. The note of urgency sounds again in the counsel to be reconciled with an adversary on the way to the judge before judgement comes. "God has spoken by his prophets, spoken his unchanging word" is deeply reassuring to those who follow the Christ. So much of Jesus' teaching tells us to live in the present in such a way that we prepare ourselves for the future. We may even change it a little!

Bishop Arthur Jones

Your prayers are asked in our healing ministry for Diana Croyston, Beryl Tanner, JPeter, Ron Thoburn, Suzanne Jacobson, Cena Quiapos, Benjie Gonzales, Ron Jacob, Bonnie SyCip, Fidelia Matthews, Ema Duhaylongsod, Ted Whale, Jovel Llagas, Loy Solasco, Emerinciana Gatela, Augusto Natividad, Avelina Collado, Amy Gonzales, Eric Williamson, Carlyn-Fern Manning, Richard Kendall, Johnny Manning Jr, Carrie Angus, Jaqueline Acquiatan, Janet Johnstone, Susan Dalmas, Sunny Cabanang, Gloria Domingo, Richard Biteng, Katsi Araneta.

This week:

Monday, August 16.

- Vestry Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Rectory.

Tuesday, August 17.

- Bible Study, 10am

Thursday, August 19.

- Midweek Eucharist, 9am, Chapel

Next Week's Readings:

Isaiah 28:14-22;

Psalm 46;

Hebrews 12:18-19,22-29;

Luke 13:22-30

	Last Sunday	Year-to- date	Proportionate Budget	2010 Budget
Pledge	P22,950.00	P2,472,208.48	P2,400,000.00	P3,900,000.00
Loose Plate	P15,320.00	P552,796.03	P578,461.54	P940,000.00

The church's monthly *Sources & Uses* report is available for viewing in the Church Office. Please look for Maricel. For questions, feel free to email Edison at edisonyap@gmail.com