



Twenty-Ninth Sunday Autumn Ordinary time~ October 16, 2022

Annual Catholic Appeal INTRODUCTION Sunday

Homily, Fr. Ed Hislop

Last Sunday, Jesus asked a poignant and challenging question after he healed the lepers and only one returned to give thanks: “*Were not the others healed? Where are they?*” And to the one who gave thanks, as we are doing here today around the Lord’s Table, he did not ask a question but gave a command: “*Stand up and go...*”

Despite their absence Jesus, we know, does not give up on those who are too busy to be present or too pre-occupied with their own concerns to remember to take the time to offer thanks or to open their eyes to the needs of people in order to share the grief and anguish, the joy and hope of fellow human beings.

Today, the image of a battle between Amalek and Moses might reflect the struggle, which we all feel, to engage in the care and service of the too many victims of our communities, crying with so many *needs*, but whose *gifts* are too often unwelcomed. Amalek inspires division and tempts a seeming retreat to days long gone, or a spirit of discouragement that inspires inaction. All of that imaged, perhaps, in Amalek waging war against the vision of inclusion, participation, loving service and care-filled presence, which, we were reminded of two Sundays ago, is a vision and promise which “still has its time.” “If it delays,” we were told, “wait for it!” Moses, who might be like us, grows weary of waiting, and even unsteady, though persistent, despite the seeming victory of Amalek. He is given the rock of faith to secure him and is held by those who in the midst of the battle still believe, still hope, and still persist and serve.

Today, as we prepare to offer our support for the Annual Catholic Appeal, we meet another persistent and unrelenting minister of the Church. Who is this persistent widow of whom Jesus speaks?

She is the one who does not fit, one for whom the accepted ways of living or believing are not possible. She is the one who is different, who finds it difficult, perhaps even impossible, to find a home in the community or even in the Church. She is those who are on the side lines, the one who is passed by, the “many” sometimes missed or not seen!

She could be all those to whom we are invited to serve, “engage in battle for,” with raised and open hands, and for whom we offer a gift. She could also be any one of us here who feels forgotten, betrayed, abandoned, misunderstood, set aside, sent away, longing to be seen. She could be those who were once part of the church but became lost along the way, or could no longer bear the inconsistencies.

Could it be that it is to such ones that we are sent, with the strength of others who hold up and open our hands, with the words: “stand up and go...”? When we are able to say “Thank you,” to those who offer us the rock of faith for support and hold up our hands, some on one side and some on the other, do we, can we, despite the weariness and disappointment we feel, and know others bear, still remain faithful to what we have learned and believed? As we see Amalek still attacking, still waging war, do we, like Moses, “stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in our hand?” Can we be as persistent as the woman seeking justice as we

consider our gift for the Annual Catholic Appeal?

Gazing on us, even in our weariness, will Christ find “faith on earth?” The answer to the question, for us, is truly a resounding “yes!” Yes, because so many of us respond to the needs in both our Diocese and Parish. Yes, because our generous sacrifice does “*render a just decision.*” Yes, because we, like Aaron and Hur, remember “the many” whom we have held in our arms; whose weariness we have refreshed; whose lives we have raised up. Yes, because we are still here. Yes, because what we have done and given

fills us with thanksgiving and we have come back and uttered the words, “thank you.” Yes, because we are persistent in our search for justice and in our generous response.

And so again Christ commands us, “*stand up and go,*” “*whether it is convenient or inconvenient...*” “*Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed.*” Act with justice and do not be slow to answer.

Look! Here I have found faith on earth!

WE ARE HERE! “JESUS IS ALIVE!”

