



Thirtieth Sunday Autumn Ordinary Time, October 27, 2024

Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 126: 1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6; Hebrews 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-52

Homily ~ Fr. Ed Hislop

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Courage in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow, solace for the weary... Mercy, he has shown... Sing of the Lord's goodness..." Words coming from voices filled with faith, raised in hope; a song sung, words from our shared heart imbued with the vision of Christ.

A sharp contrast to the words we hear day in and day out; songs of threat, when human beings are set aside; life, from its beginning to its end, mocked, too many people, families, children, and infants, set aside, kept out, denounced, and threatened. Hatred and blame, judgement, and exclusion, we fear, seems to be on the march with too many in the haunting parade.

Yet, through it all, as if the words were first spoken today, Jeremiah appears, speaking uneasy and disconcerting words to those parading in costumes of yester-year. He sings a song of hope to those kept out, watching the parade of threat moving through their life. Words like a song in the darkness, words for the courageous in the midst of sorrow, words evoking a prayerful mantra: *Have pity on us, we want to see.* Words which frighten the many in the parade: "The Lord will deliver his people, gathering them from the ends of the earth, with the blind and the lame, the rejected and the blamed in their midst; the mothers and those with child... they all shall return as an immense throng...and none shall stumble! *Those who sow in tears will reap rejoicing!*"

In that watching throng are all who yearn for life, the unborn, but not only them: Those who are born, the child living in poverty, murdered in war and on the streets without a home, oppressed by unrelenting addictions; the son or daughter torn from a mother or father's arms; the child abused, bullied and hungry; the child—too many—murdered in school with weapons meant only for

war, yet still available to all. The child of an immigrant, fearful of losing father or mother. The mother or father, grandmother or grandfather panicked with threats of being rounded up and sent away—frightening horror from another age. Every one of them, every one of them, have the "Right to Life," even as the jeering parade marches on.

The "Right to Life," easy words to say, but hollow unless the words first spoken are: "Have pity on me; I want to see." *I want to see a larger vision of what it means to truly respect human life.* While the dignity of the unborn is foundational, our Catholic vision is always, always about all of life in all its aspects—the first moment of life is not the last. "*Lord, I want to see,*" must be our mantra.

How do we respect life, in the midst of economic disparity when providing for the care of children born is out of reach for so many? Where is the "respect for life," as unrelenting gun violence is allowed to continue unchecked? *Have pity on me, Lord, "I want to see!"*

How is life respected as thousands and thousands of children, men, women, young, old, infants in the womb, and newly born are slaughtered this very day in Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and so many other places—war in which have a part! "*Lord, have pity, I want to see!*"

Where is the "respect for the life" of those who are fleeing their nations because of fear, violence, or extreme poverty, as they come to our country, "dreaming" of the same gifts or potential that each of our ancestors sought and received? Even as they too we were unwelcomed. Maybe they sing with today's psalm: "*The Lord has done great things for them...*" "May our mouth soon be filled with laughter and our tongue with rejoicing," a dream longing to be fulfilled. What is their true

name? It is neighbor, sister, brother—no other name for them can be uttered by anyone who claims to believe in or follow Christ. *“Lord, have pity on me, I want to see!”*

Where is the “respect for life,” when vengeance and anger justify death and so-called capital punishment is upheld, threatened, and even praised? *“Have pity on me; I want to see.”* I want to see a larger, truly Catholic vision of what it means to “respect life.”

As a Church, as people of the Gospel, we need to provide again and again a larger vision of what it means to respect life. NO SINGLE ISSUE WILL EVER DO THAT. We honor all of life, even in all its complexities, or we honor none of it! *Why?*

*Because it is God-given. We honor life knowing that we “do not know the mind of God!”*

We honor life, not by judging, name calling or separating, but by gathering all from the ends of earth. We respect life by listening with compassion, honoring with mercy, loving with hope, and singing of the Lord’s goodness.

We reverence life, with a humble plea: *“Lord, I want to see.” Have pity on us! Give “Courage in the darkness...” bring “solace for the weary.” ... Show mercy as we “Sing of the Lord’s goodness...”*

