

“Christ has no body now but yours”

Biblical text: Mark 10: 35-45

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.” When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Introduction

Greetings of peace and love. Let me start by teaching you one tagalog word, “Mabuhay”. It’s a Filipino greeting which is an expression about your happiness of life. I want to invite all of you to say MA – BU – HAY. Buhay means life! Good morning. It’s already March 1, the days and time is so fast, Spring is just around the corner. Another thing that is fast is technology, new inventions, new gadgets, some of us have not yet learn to use one device, one or two months later, there’s already a new version of that device, whether it is a cellphone, TV, laptop or other electronic devices. Today the whole nation might still be thinking about Winter Olympics. But this morning I am asking each everyone to slow down. I want each and every one to pause, reflect, let us feel and be in the presence of the Loving Spirit that guides us, as we listen to the message. Right now, let us not think about what we are going to do later or tomorrow, or the next week. Instead let us all focus on God’s presence and what the message is saying to us. Let us pray. God of Love and Equality, we are thankful and blessed to gather in worship, to listen and be empowered by the message. Surround us with your spirit as we reflect on your challenging message. Open our hearts and open our minds. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. Amen

How many of us have heard about Teresa of Avila? She was born in Spain in 1515, a Carmelite nun which is famous for her writings, poems and for being a reformer, focusing on the needs of the society. She founded a convent, and wrote the book The Way of Perfection, she is also regarded as a saint. One of her poem and also considered as a prayer is entitled “**Christ has no body now but yours**”. This is also translated into a Hymn and now is included in the More Voices #171. As we reflect on a Lenten Journey, we will reflect on that poem, we will see the challenge of Jesus for us disciples regarding the service and we will meditate on what is the world’s view on servant hood. Let me share the poem.

Christ Has No Body - INSTRUMENT

Christ has no body but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks, Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks, compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Teresa of Avila showed the necessity of Christ disciples to use our life as an instrument of God's love to the world. Our life indeed is the **instrument** of God to reflect love on the world. Each part of our body is an instrument if we are willing to become one. **Our eyes**, it is use not only to gain knowledge like reading or to see the beauty of the earth, but it is an instrument to see the needs of the world. As we see the needs we offer our service for others, compassion, if you see an injustice around you, pray and fight for justice. Our eyes were given to us not for only watching TV, reading a book and browsing on the internet. Our eyes are to see the world, to see others, and to see what God wants us to fulfill. **Our feet**, we use it to go wherever we want to go, if we want to run, dance or walk to certain place we do it because it is what we desire. To use it as an instrument, we now let God direct where we walk, like going to the Church, go to a Bible study, practice in a choir, go help in the community or attend to an outreach program. **Our hands**, there are lot of use with our hands, to eat, to cook, to drive, to play, to browse in our phones and others. But the poem reminds us that our hands can be use as instrument that can bless the entire world. In the Philippines, during Christmas time we have this activity gift giving and feeding program, once a year you buy gifts for street children; it is great to share to others but to show an effort in sharing is more wonderful. Just imagine, if you are the one who will create and prepare the gifts, wrap the presents and go to the community to give to the kids. You don't just give money and that's it; you use your hands to prepare it. Each gift is blessing for that child that receives it, it is not from you but a blessing from God through you. The same with feeding program, you go to the market, buy the food, you cook it yourself, and you distribute it. You can feel the work of your hands as you serve others, especially those who are in need. Just like one of the program, we supported "The Matriarchs Collective. Christ has no body but yours, **"our body as an instrument to reflect Christ in the world"**.

The first step is using our body as an instrument, but what is next? The next is **SERVICE**

Our biblical text is a story of a Mother's request or a desire of his two disciples to sit beside Jesus in the kingdom of God; they want to sit on the left and the right of the Lord. Just imagine if you are sitting beside a King, you are the second in command, you have power, you have authority over others and people will recognize your position in the Kingdom. This is what James and John want. So Jesus asks them, Can you drink the cup I drink? They said "we can", but do they really know what they are saying. Then all disciples heard this request and they become indignant with the two brothers, all of them started quarrelling and debating, each one wanted that kind of authority, recognition and power. Then Jesus said, **"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** Jesus has provided a message to his disciples about **service**, which means **to serve**. Not only to serve but to give your life as a ransom for many.

When you look at it, Jesus was talking about His life; the whole ministry of Jesus was to serve. He went into different towns healing and preaching, bringing the message to everyone. He did not do this for recognition and power; he did this out of love. He saw the injustice and oppression around, and he did something about it. He gave his life in service. Another thing about Jesus, he did not call his disciples so that he will have servants that will follow him or servants he could command. Even though his disciples call and regard Jesus as master, he did not act like a King with authority and power; he acted like a family to all his disciples. In these words, Jesus have provided the meaning of service, to serve God **your focus should be for others and not for you**. This is the same service that Christ wants us to use our body. **I came to serve means, that the purpose of our life is not only for our needs and our goals, but to look at the needs of others and provide help**. Jesus reminded us that greatness is seen not in controlling others, but it is seen in your service to others. By serving others we give purpose to our life, we bring meaning to our existence and it's our way of thanksgiving to God, our creator. Christ has no body now but yours, **"our life is to serve and not to be served"**.

What is the third thing we can do with our body as an instrument, **Proclamation and Witness**. I have three questions. How can the words of Jesus spread if no one will speak and teach it? How can message of love spread if no one will show it? How can the light of Jesus will be seen if no one will reflect it in their lives? The answer is simple; it is thru Proclamation of our Faith, being a witness. We are called to share our faith in words and actions. This statement is both a challenge and a responsibility. The question of Jesus to his disciples is the same question for us now, **“Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”** You say you believe in me and you want to follow me, but do you want to do something about it. **Drinking the cup is following Jesus life, servant hood, humility and suffering**. Drinking the cup is learning about the teachings of Jesus, you cannot share the cup without tasting it. You cannot share the words of Jesus, if you have not read or study the Bible. Drinking the cup is to be a witness of love to others in our life.

Following Jesus Teachings is not easy, proclaiming our faith and being a witness will need a lot of sacrifice. As Jesus face trials and tribulations, as disciples we too will face the same challenges. That’s why earlier I told you that we must “sit down” and reflect, being a disciple is not a hurried process. You need to ask yourself, **Can you drink the cup?** Are you willing to proclaim faith in your words and in your actions? **The challenge to the church and to each of us is to live the truth we know**. Witness is compelling your life as someone who embodies the goodness of God’s life in Christ. Christ has no body now but yours, **“our words proclaim faith, our actions witness of faith”**.

If you want to be an instrument of God’s love, you serve, and you proclaim your faith.

Have you heard people ask this question, God, what will I gain by serving you? When I was teaching during Bible study, I shared a Philippine context about discipleship or serving in the Church. There are different ways in serving in the Church, becoming a church worker, teaching in the seminary, serving in the community, Social ministry and becoming Church volunteers. There are a lot of ways of offering and providing service in the church and outside the church. What do they have in common? Willingness, to be an instrument, to serve and to proclaim Faith, you need to love doing it. I will take this opportunity to thank volunteers in the Church, you are a person who freely offers to take part in service.

But sometimes this kind of service can be corrupted without this, it is the same thing that the disciples like James and John was thinking. They desire for authority and power; they are offering a service in exchange for recognition. Sometimes people serve the church for personal glory and for control of power. People sometimes serve others for public recognition, giving to the needy and asking more in return. Others they volunteer and serve because they want to be honoured for the service they have provided. This world teaches us that power, strength and riches are in control, but Jesus reminded us that “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all”. **Willingness**, it is serving without conditions, loving unconditionally and offering your life to the Ministry without asking something in return. Willingness is defined as an act done gladly, actions that are cheerful and wholeheartedness. Christ has no body now but yours, **“our willingness to offer our life to the Ministry”**

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Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world. Amen.