**“Call to Holiness”**

All our readings today point us to holiness that God wants for us. It is the desire of God that we all become holy so we can live with Him for eternity. Through our sacraments of baptism and confirmation, God has given us the weapons against any principality, and the devil so we can become holy. He has given us the Holy Spirit through our Baptism and confirmation to guide us to holiness. It is up to us to accept this grace He has freely given us to be holy.

In our first reading, God through Prophet Isaiah shared with us what would be the mission for His Son who would come to serve and not be served. He would send Him to carry out the command He gave to the tribes of Israel. The command to make Him known to all nations. Therefore, the Messiah would become the new Israel who would show the glory of God to the rest of the world. He would form His Son in the womb as the servant who would restore the tribes of Israel to Himself.

The mission of the Son would be, first, to bring back the tribes of Israel to the way of the Lord. Second, His mission would be to convert their hearts to submit and seek the will of God so they would be holy as He is holy. Third, He mission would then expand to the restoration of the rest of the world. His mission would include bringing God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. Fourth, He would be the light that makes all the nations holy. It is through His light that we would see light. His light through the will of God, would lead all to Holiness.

In our second reading, St Paul wrote to the church in Corinth telling them that God has sanctified them and those who call on the name of Jesus Christ to be holy. This means that by calling on the name of Jesus, we are called to be holy. It means when we know His name, we would obey His commandment and be holy. Our holiness comes from Him and not from anything we do on our own. He is the one that can make us holy as long as we are open to receiving His grace to be holy.

God has called us by our name and He has asked us to follow Him. He has chosen us, we have nor chosen Him. We should not be afraid to accept His invitation and grace to follow Him. We should not be afraid of where His call might lead us. His love for us is infinite and would never change. Time and time again, He has made it known to us how madly He is in love with us. He has given us His promise that He would always be with us. All He wants from us is to love Him and our neighbor as ourselves.

In our Gospel reading, we heard from St. John the Evangelist, the account of what happened the next day after Jesus was baptized. John the Baptist as the forerunner, introduced Jesus to the crowd following him. This indicates a special moment. It signaled an exchange of baton to the Anchor in the race for our salvation. Earlier during his ministry, John had told his follower that he was not the Messiah. Now, he his pointing to the Messiah that the people of Israel had been waiting for.

John went further, by telling them that though he came into the world before the Messiah, Jesus existed before him. He explained to them, that his reason for baptizing was for the purpose of introducing the Messiah to Israel which is similar, to how the best Man or the maid-of-honor in a wedding would introduce the Groom or the bride to the wedding guest by a toast. So John the Baptist did the toasting of Jesus for the crowd so they could know Him as the Messiah.

Furthermore, he pointed out how the Holy Spirit like a dove came down upon the Messiah to confirm what God had told him would happen. It was a sign of public anointing of the Messiah by God. John indicated his job was done because he had testified that Jesus is the Son of God. Now he must decrease and the Messiah must increase.

The main mission of Jesus was our redemption; culminating by His laying down His life for us on the cross. Every message of Jesus, calls us to repentance and holiness. His, is a call to do the will of God by being faithful to His words. By His will, God has graced us to be holy.

As we come with utmost reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for His grace to be holy.