

Liturgy Alive of Saturday of 22nd Week of Ordinary Time

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THE LAW HAS TO SERVE PEOPLE

Introduction

Paul criticizes his Corinthians in an ironic way for their pretenses, but he says he does so because he loves them. What do they have that they have not received?

A frequent sign of their own insecurity is that people seek security in laws and traditions. The more they insist on these, the more they try to bend people to these, the greater their insecurity. Laws are supposed to be in the service of the community, not vice versa. They may never become a block or a screen between people. They are not absolutes but servants of people.

Opening Prayer

Lord our God,
Jesus your Son came not to abolish the law
but to fill it with the dimensions of love.
Do not allow commandments and rules
to stand between you and us nor between people,
but let them lead us gently,
as good educators, to you and to our neighbor
and teach us to go beyond the law
in generosity and serving love.
Make us free with the freedom brought us
by your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commentary

In Corinth there were evidently problems of the human ego. The question of the inflated ego led to one person's being championed over another. But when all is said and done, everything they had was gift. People began to brag about their accomplishments. The apostles continued to work incessantly as ministers of the gospel, often ridiculed and seen as fools; at the same time, there were those in Corinth who exalted themselves.

Paul writes to them as their father in Christ; it is a paternal admonition.

Self-esteem is something that we all cherish. But when this leads to self-adulation, we are wandering from true Christian humility. Christ rejected the request of James and John for places of honor in his kingdom. For anyone to be first, he must be the servant of all. It is the last who will be first. This is not an easy lesson to learn, but it is at the heart of the gospel.

It is not surprising that Jesus showed little interest in the apostles' plucking grain on the Sabbath. His concerns went far beyond that. When we are tempted to place ourselves on a pedestal, let us remember the apostles, who went hungry and thirsty while they followed Christ. It remains a great and noble thing to give oneself entirely for the cause of Christ, even if it escapes human notice.

Points to Ponder

True greatness: recognition by the Lord
The dangers of pride
Admonition and Christian concern

Intercessions

- That Christians may regard the commandments as doors to freedom from sin and evil and ways to serve God and people, we pray:
- That lawmakers everywhere make laws that are humane and serve the good of all in the community, we pray:
- That we may seek security in love of God and the service of people, we pray:

Prayer over the Gifts

God our Father,
in these signs, your gifts to us
and the fruit of our work,
we make ourselves available to you.
Do not allow us to seek false security
in observing the letter of the law
but help us to seek the insecurity and risk
of committing ourselves to you and people,
as Jesus did, your Son,
who lives with you and with us
now, and we hope and pray, for ever.

Prayer after Communion

Lord our God,
in this eucharist we have celebrated
the memorial of your Son's death and rising.
He followed the law of the heart
and made love the heart of all laws.
Let the bread of life of your Son
make our love inventive and creative
in the service of people
and help us to follow the directives
of our hearts and consciences,
in the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Lord for ever.

Blessing

Christ has made us free. Let us not give up that freedom by slavishly sticking to practices and

traditions that do not reflect the gospel. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.