

21st Sun C... Lost, Einstein

Introduction

Story... Where Are We Going?

"I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist, who this month has been honored by Time magazine as the Man of the Century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked on the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it.

The conductor said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it."

Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one."

Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too know who I am...what I don't know is where I'm going."

I Where Are We Going?

In the first reading the Prophet Isaiah reminds the people of Israel where they were going... and indeed, where God invites all people... invites! We are invited to God's holy mountain, to our heavenly home. The Book of Revelation, Chapter 21: 3-5 gives us even more details about this:

...3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.

4He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away."

5And the One seated on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are faithful and true."...

We know where we're going... we know where we're invited.

II Difficulties Getting There

The second reading from Paul's Letter to the Hebrew Christians reminds us that getting to our heavenly home might not always be easy... there are challenges, there are difficulties. Sometimes God might even have to teach us difficult lessons. But our loving God can write straight with crooked lines. I work with a lot of folks in AA. Many of them have hurt others and have hurt themselves thru their addiction. They have had to suffer the consequences of their behaviors. Some have lost their jobs, some their families, some have even been imprisoned. But God never gives up on them. Those who make it to AA will witness to God's power touching their lives and how they have learned thru their mistakes and how they try to make amends as best they can and live lives of integrity and service. They are not perfect, but they are walking miracles witnessing to a loving God who has saved their lives thru the help of AA and other folks in AA.

Loving God never gives up on anyone.

God wants all of us to come home.

III The Gospel

In today's Gospel Jesus tells us that we come home to God only with the help of God, the encouragement of God and the healing of loving God. It is only thru God's mercy that we make our journey home... Here's what Pope Francis says in his beautiful announcement of this year as a year of God's mercy.

1. Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Father, "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature. In the "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to his plan of salvation, he sent his only Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person^[1] reveals the mercy of God.

2. We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

Conclusion...

Remember, we know where we're going, even if the journey gets a little rough and difficult. Loving God invites us to our heavenly home. Jesus has led the way. Just this past week we celebrated the feast of the Assumption... Mary has gone before us to our heavenly home. We are a people of hope... relentless hope because we have a God of mercy and a Good Shepherd who accompanies us. Go to Ps 23 and just pray it quietly.

As we continue with this Mass we offer ourselves to our loving Father, as did Jesus.

We remember Jesus' love poured out for us in forgiveness and compassion as he himself entered the valley of darkness to come thru it into new life. At communion Jesus invites us to come forward to be fed and strengthened for our continuing journey to our heavenly home. Come forward with hope and with gratitude that the Lord loves us so much that He journeys with us even now.