



29th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME **YEAR B – October 21, 2018**

The scriptures today speak to us about the importance of service if we want to be part of the kingdom of God. This weekend, we observe World Mission Sunday and Bishop Schlert asks us to remember the people who work in the 1,150 dioceses in Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands and the remote regions of Latin America. All of us are missionaries, in a sense, and this weekend, we are called on to help each other. Please be generous with your prayers and your financial support.

It's not always easy to serve the needs of others. Sometimes you will be misunderstood, even unappreciated. Your motives will be questioned, and you may be accused of butting in where you don't belong. Mother Teresa said on one occasion, If you help others, they will resent you for what you do, help them anyway.

Isaiah, in the first reading today (Isaiah 53:10-11), foretells the future and predicts the price that Jesus will pay for trying to help us. He will be crushed for our offenses and he will bear our guilt. And that did indeed happen.

The second reading (Hebrew 4:14-16) tells us that Jesus can relate to the problems we have to deal with because he too has been tested in every way. Remember when he hung on the cross and had to deal with what St. John calls the dark night of the soul.

Not long ago, I was in a conversation with one of our parishioners and she had just experienced some traumatic events in her life. She said she felt abandoned by God and was not able to pray. She envied the great saints who always felt the presence of God no matter what happened to them. And then she added, "I wish I could be like that."

I mentioned to her that even great saints experience the dark night of the soul, and when that happens, they continue to trust our Lord, even though they are not able to pray. Jesus does not abandon us even though it may seem that he does. Let me share with you the words of someone who knows about the "dark night".

She writes, *"The reality of darkness and coldness and emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul. I want God with all the power of my soul - and yet, between us - there is a terrible separation. I feel the constant pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, of God not really existing."* Those words were written by Mother Teresa in her private writings before she died.

It doesn't mean she was losing her faith. It does mean she was as human as you and me. What do you do when those dark nights grip your soul? Do what Mother Teresa did. Continue to trust Jesus and continue to help others. That's what she did. That's what people do in the missions every day. They Believe in the sun, even when it is not shining. They believe in love, even when they are alone. They believe in God, even when God is silent. For a few moments in silence, reflect on what you believe.

