

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Ordinary Time

The central theme of today's readings is the necessity for trusting Faith in God's promises and vigilant preparedness among Christ's followers to meet their God as their Judge, at the time of their death. Fidelity in doing God's will is the best preparation for our death. The first reading cites the Faith-filled preparedness of the ancient Hebrew slaves in Egypt before their mass exodus to the Promised Land. Their trusting faith in their God's promises gave them hope. We are told how their Faith and Hope resulted in their liberation. With expectant Hope, the Hebrews sacrificed the first Passover lamb and ate the first ritual meal, as prescribed by their God through Moses. They awaited their imminent release and were prepared for it.

Today's Responsorial Psalm, invites us to express our own confidence in God and to declare our trust in His Providence. In the Second Reading, the author defines Faith as "*the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen*" (Heb 11:1). He tries to support the Faith of the Jewish Christians (the Hebrews), by appealing to the example of their ancestors, starting with Abraham, and reviewing the things they had accomplished by Faith. In the Gospel, Jesus challenges his disciples to trust the Father's promise to give them eternal happiness in His kingdom. But they are to be prepared at all times, because the Son of Man will come at an unexpected hour, either at the moment of their death or at the end of the world, whichever is earlier. Using the master-thief parable, Jesus warns us to be on our guard so that the thief (the devil), may not steal our treasure of Divine grace or our relationship with God by his temptations. Using the master-servant parable, Jesus reminds us always to do the will of God by obeying Jesus' commandment of love and offering humble and sacrificial service to others.

We need to be vigilant and ready to face the Lord. One of the traditional means for remaining alert is prayer. The most important element in prayer is listening to God – an attitude of attention to the "tiny whispering sound" of the Lord (1 Kgs 19:11-12). Such attentiveness demands that we set aside a quiet time every day, during which, we can tune our ears to the Divine sounds of love, harmony and peace. We always need to be prepared to meet Our Lord as our judge. Let us recall the words of the Book of Revelation: "*Behold, I stand at*

*the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him and he with me”.*

Since nobody is sure about the time and circumstances of his or her death, we must be ever prepared to face Jesus our Lord and Savior as our Judge at the moment of our death to give an account of our lives. He wants to see that we have kept our personal relationship with him by growing in holiness. Such a growth is assisted by daily talking to him and listening to him in Bible reading; by asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit every day; by recharging our spiritual batteries through offering our lives on the altar and getting spiritual nourishment in Holy Communion during the Holy Mass; by getting reconciled with God every day, asking for His pardon and forgiveness with a repentant heart and seeking His forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation for serious sins; and by obeying Jesus’ commandment of love by serving all the people around us, sacrificially sharing our blessings with them, by seeing the face of Jesus in everyone.

We need to wait for the Lord. “Waiting for Christ to return” means working for the coming of the Kingdom of God. This means doing God’s will by rendering humble service to others, by combating poverty, by ending the hatred that divides us, by establishing peace among individuals and nations, by curbing the pride that causes us to become confrontational, and by building social structures that respect the dignity of individual humans. We must wait for the Lord in our daily lives by learning to see Jesus in the least of our brothers and sisters. In other words, we must be prepared to serve Jesus in whatever form he takes. What we frequently discover in “serving” other people is that God comes to us through them.

**Prayer:** O God, you are always faithful to your promises. In our Christian life, you have entrusted us with particular duties and responsibilities. You want us to be faithful stewards of these duties and thus be responsible for spreading your Kingdom. We realize that there are moments, when we are unfaithful to our vocation and mission and to the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to us. Thus we have betrayed the trust you have placed in us and have become obstacles for the spread of your Kingdom. We are sorry for our irresponsible behavior, negligence and delay of duties. Grant that we may remain vigilant and prepared to meet the Lord Jesus when he comes unexpectedly at the end of our life or at the end of time. Amen.