

CARITAS IN VERITATE || CHARITY IN TRUTH

HOMILY HINTS

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – SEPTEMBER 6, 2009

Scripture

Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? (James 2:5)

He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" And immediately the man's ears were opened. (Mark 7: 33-35)

Teaching

While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human. God reveals man to himself; reason and faith work hand in hand to demonstrate to us what is good, provided we want to see it; the natural law, in which creative Reason shines forth, reveals our greatness, but also our wretchedness insofar as we fail to recognize the call to moral truth. (CV, 75)

Application

- Pope Benedict explains that social question of our age are anthropological questions. One cannot hear the cry of the poor if one fails to recognize the value of the human person.
- James tells us that "God chose those who are poor to be rich in faith..." The poor, the unborn, those who are difficult to love as a revelation of his kingdom. Our blessedness is found in our poverty.
- Jesus' opening of man's ears speaks of his Gospel allowing us to hear his Truth and His love. The Church has a mandate to speak the truth and Pope Benedict is fulfilling this message by applying that message to today world. If we are to love, we must love in truth.
- Pope Benedict reminds us of the truth that our redefinition of human has global implications. Our refusal to acknowledge the gift of life leads inevitably to systems which treat human below their given dignity. This in turn leads to deeper systems of global poverty.
- Defending life in the Archdiocese of Washington lifts up all those without a voice in our world.

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HOMILY HINTS

24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – SEPTEMBER 13, 2009

Scripture

So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2: 17)

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.” (Mark 8: 34-35)

Teaching

The second reading takes up the relationship of faith to works. Jesus makes it quite clear that faith moves us to act in a particular way. In the Gospel Jesus proclaims that we are called to live our lives in service of the Gospel.

In *Caritas in veritate*, Pope Benedict writes “if we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them.” (CV, 3) He rightly points out that often times today the real meaning of charity has been lost or misunderstood, Pope Benedict writes “it [charity] has become undervalued in the world today.” (CV, 2)

Pope Benedict XVI makes a connection between charity and love: “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them [our neighbor]. (CV, 6)

Application

- Faith is lived out, worked out in relationship with other people. Today’s second reading reminds us of the importance of the corporal works of mercy-that of feeding the hungry- an act of charity that is an expression of justice
- We see that we are called to give our neighbor what they need-it is not only the charitable thing to do but it is a matter of justice because it is the *right thing* to do.
- The encyclical makes a connection between the practice of charity in small ways and the practice of charity within the context of globalization and whole economic systems. What this Scripture passage and the economy have in common is at the core of both –is people and the way in which people relate to one another.
- All of us probably know someone who lost a house or job because of global economic forces that have destabilized a global system in a way that has a very local and personal impact.

CARITAS IN VERITATE || CHARITY IN TRUTH

HOMILY HINTS

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – SEPTEMBER 20, 2009

Scripture

The wicked say: Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us; he sets himself against our doings...Let us see whether his words be true; for if the just one is the son of God, God will defend him. (Wisdom 2)

Beloved: Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace. (James 3: 16-18)

...[H]e began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child, he placed it in their midst and putting his arms around it, he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me. (Mark 9: 33-37)

Teaching

“Love is God’s greatest gift to humanity’ it is his promise and our hope.” (CV, 2)

“Love - *caritas* - is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace.” (CV, 1)

“Because it is a gift received by everyone, charity in truth is a force that builds community, it brings all people together without imposing barriers or limits.” (CV, 34)

“Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God’s family as his sons and daughters, will we be able to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism. The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God. Openness to God makes us open towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity.” (CV, 78)

Application

- Each of the three readings highlight the human tendency of creating conflict, tension, and unhealthy relationships with competition based in jealousy and a false sense of superiority. In the first reading, there is a plan to test “the just one” in order to reveal the truth of God’s love. In the second, jealousy and ambition results in disorder to which healing and order is established as a gift from above through those who cultivate peace. And finally, in the Gospel, the followers of Christ, bogged down in competitive arguments amongst themselves as to who is the greatest, are presented with the ultimate paradox from Christ himself. Greatness is achieved from the posture of service and welcoming those who are among the least, the powerless.

- Christ, who taught through story and image, takes a child, places his arm around the child in a gesture that speaks of warmth, connection and welcome, instructs his followers directly to the path of spiritual wholeness and relationship to God. Christ defines power not as a individual achievement of status or purpose, but rather a direct relationship of service and communion with those who have no power. He calls us into direct communion with one another in a way that breaks through social barriers created by arbitrary social structures.

- This “love in truth” challenges us in this particular period of time as we face enormous challenges in our economic and environmental conduct, to a new way of thinking. Solutions to the problems we face in our economy, ecology, migration, social and political practices and policies, must reflect the principle of solidarity, that we are one single family. We are to welcome life in all stages and in all ways.

- At this point in our history, as we experience the failure of certain economic and social practices, both in the personal familial level as well as the social and economic levels, nationally and globally, we are called by God to ask certain questions:
 - How are we creating authentic and deeper relationships among and within our families, friendships, neighborhoods, work places, civic organizations and beyond in a culture of competition and rapid communication?
 - How do we welcome those who are different from our own perspectives and experiences? How do we create parishes where all are truly welcome? What do I need to see within myself that builds up walls of fear and barriers of exclusion towards others?
 - How do my buying and spending practices affect others, even beyond our national borders?
 - Do our workplace and business practices encourage healthy or unhealthy competition that fosters collaboration and mutual trust?
 - How do we work to alleviate not only material poverty, and the systems that create poverty, but how do we address the poverty of isolation and loneliness?
 - Am I fully open and welcoming to life in all stages and in all ways?

CARITAS IN VERITATE || CHARITY IN TRUTH

HOMILY HINTS

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

Scripture

Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; (James 5: 1-3)

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. (Psalm 19)

There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. (Mark 9: 39-40)

Teaching

Charity in truth is the synthesis of the entire law. It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbor. As Christians we look beyond the good of the individual to the good of society. What we call the common good is the good of all of us, individuals and families and groups that together constitute society. (CV, 4)

In Pope Benedict's new encyclical, *Caritas in veritate* (*Charity in Truth*), he draws out for us what it means to live faithfully in today's world. It is as the title proclaims living truth in the practice of charity. Pope Benedict writes "that in the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativist truth, practicing charity in truth helps people understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and true integral human development." (CV, 4)

Application

- Over the last couple of weeks we have been reading from James. The author of James intention was to affirm that faith, if it is real faith, leads to faithful living. This reading is one of the harshest condemnation of a materialistic mindset
- *Charity in Truth* is an important document for Catholics and for all members of society because at the heart of our economic challenges are people and the Church seeks to defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at home and in the world.
- Our interdependence is not only expressed in ministries of charity; feeding the poor and sheltering the homeless but also in the way we practice stewardship of the earth's resources, we welcome the immigrant, we provide for laborers. There is not any aspect of communal life that is outside the realm of Christian truth and Christian life.
- Pope Benedict writes that when we speak of the human person, we must speak of the spiritual because if the spiritual is not considered then development will not be authentic. In the conclusion of *Charity and Truth*, the Holy Father writes authentic human development requires new eyes and a new heart, capable of rising above a materialistic vision of human events, capable glimpsing in development the "beyond" that technology cannot give" (CV, conclusion).