

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Deuteronomy 18:15 – 20
Psalm 95: 1, 2, 6 – 9
1 Corinthians 7: 32 – 35
Mark 1:21 – 28

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 29, 2012

Word: **Obeying the Will of God makes us a blessing to others.**

Theme: **We are a blessing to others when we speak God's Word with authority**

Promise: ***"I will raise up for them a prophet like you among their kin, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him."*** (Dt 18:18)

Reflection:

In His book *"The Catholic Church the End of an Age – What is the Spirit Saying?"* Ralph Martin analyzes the decline in membership among the Catholic Church and mainline Protestant Churches in the Americas to Europe, Africa, and Asia. In a 1991 report about South America, which was supposed to be a bastion of the Catholic Church, the number of non-Catholics have increased from four million in 1967 to forty million in 1991. Among the Hispanics in the United States, who now constitute nearly a third of American Catholics, five million have left the Catholic Church in the last ten years to join the Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches. Even in the Philippines, wherever you go, there are sects like Iglesia ni Cristo, the Mormons, Dating Daan and the others.

The main reasons for the success of Pentacostals, Evangelicals and other such churches, are their zeal and deep conviction, as exemplified in their evangelical drive in Russia. They have the zeal to bring Jesus Christ to the hearts of others. Upon invitation of the Russian Ministry of Education, 60 Evangelical Groups and Colleges from the United States, calling themselves CoMission, went to Russia to train educators in 120,000 public schools how to teach Judeo-Christian principles. They invited Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant groups, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists to help out, but only evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants answered the call. The other strong point of these groups is their attention to the needs of body and soul, effective organizations in small groups, and lively, warm and enjoyable worship.

People are truly touched when their spiritual needs are met and given personal attention, and when they can praise and worship in a lively manner. They listen to those who genuinely live the Gospel in their lives, and whose teachings are simple and easily understood. When these groups teach about Jesus Christ their listeners feel that they are truly with Jesus.

We read in the Gospel: ***"The people were astonished at His teaching for He taught them as one having with authority and not as the scribes,"*** (Mk 1:22). How did Jesus teach? First, Jesus used parables - the birds of the air, the work of ordinary people, like the farmer in the Parable of the Sower. Jesus uses everyday experience to convey the love and mercy of the Father, for example, by touching lepers, sinners, and the outcasts of society. His teaching was accompanied by healing and deliverance. He was humble, meek and accessible.

How then, can we speak God and His Word with authority? People will listen to us when they see that we practice what we preach. When we encourage them to pray, they should know that we have an active prayer life; when we quote from the Bible, our listeners should understand that we are doers, not just proclaimers, of the Word of God. When we speak on forgiveness, they should know that we have no problems extending forgiveness to those who may have wounded us. When we speak about Jesus Christ, people need to see that we have an active and close relationship with Jesus Christ. When we pray over someone, we should bring the Holy Spirit with us. And when we share God's love, God's love should flow from us to others, including those who do not like us. Our authority should come from our Lord Jesus Christ and His Name, our deeds can then bear fruit with authority. When people witness our life in Christ Jesus, then they too, would want to have the blessed life in Jesus.

So let us then pray that God will send more prophets for a revival of zeal to propagate Jesus Christ and His Gospel in the BLD Community and in the Catholic Church that we might have the Promise of the Week: ***"I will raise up for them a prophet like you among their kin, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him."*** (Dt 18:18).

Reflection Questions:

1. How do I make the Word of God alive in my words and deeds?
2. How can I propagate the Gospel of Christ in my family and to others?
3. Am I open to minister to others?

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"