

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time [a]

October 12, 2008

Readings

Isaiah 25:6-10a

Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Matthew 22:1-14 or 22:1-10

Calendar

October 13: "Columbus Day" in the United States

Thanksgiving Day in Canada

October 14: Birthday of the Peace Corps

October 15: Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

October 16: World Food Day

[For info go to: http://www.fao.org/wfd2007/index_wfd2007/en/]

October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

[For info, go to: <http://www.un.org/events/poverty2000/index.html>]

Quotes

The economy must serve people, not the other way around.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States, 52

Farm owners and farm workers are the immediate stewards of the natural resources required to produce the food that is necessary to sustain life. These resources must be understood as gifts of a generous God. When they are seen in that light and when the human race is perceived as a single moral community, we gain a sense of the substantial responsibility we bear as a nation for the world food system. Meeting human needs today and in the future demands an increased sense of stewardship and conservation from owners, managers, and regulators of all resources, especially those required for the production of food.

US Bishops, Economic Justice for All, #228

Material goods and the way we are developing the use of them should be seen as God's gifts to us. They are meant to bring out in each one of us the image of God. We must never lose sight of how we have been created: from the earth and from the breath of God.

John Paul II, On Social Concern (Donders translation), #29

The most profound motive for our work is this knowing that we share in creation. Learning the meaning of creation in our daily lives will help us to live holier lives. It will fill the world with the spirit of Christ, the spirit of justice, charity, and peace.

John Paul II, On Human Work (Donders translation), #25

"As individuals and as a nation, therefore, we are called to make a fundamental 'option for the poor.' The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one's neighbor as one's self. Those who are marginalized and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all. This obligation is deeply rooted in Christian belief."

U.S. Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All, #87

Thoughts for your consideration

The vision of Isaiah is the vision of a God who wants good things for all people. In a world of poverty and injustice, Isaiah paints a vision of a God who provides for everyone generously. In a world of nationalism and ethnic & racial division, Isaiah paints a vision of a God who destroys the veil/web that covers over and divides all people. In a world in which people are focused on money and the problems of the economy and bailouts, Isaiah talks about discovering a God who saves us – a God with a liberating set of values. In a world which continues to see so many tears and so much injustice, Isaiah paints the vision of a God who wants to wipe away those tears and bring us together in a new way.

This vision is repeated in Jesus' story of the wedding feast. What God wants is a great wedding feast – a feast that is open to all. God is unhappy when folks don't accept the invitation. "The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests." The vision is expressed in what we call today the "option for the poor." The vision is made concrete whenever we work to include those on the outside – those without power - minorities, women, immigrants, the elderly, the sick, those who don't fit our expectations and priorities.

In our fast paced and busy world, the story of Jesus reminds us of what can prevent us from sharing in the vision of Jesus. We get too busy with other things. We miss the invitation. Instead of taking advantage of the feast, we end up going our own way to buy a farm or manage a business. We become preoccupied with money or possessions. We can get separated from the vision of Jesus; we can miss out on the great wedding feast. We can be distracted by the various ideologies of our culture – consumerism, discrimination, militarism, sexism, racism, fear, isolation, rugged individualism, nationalism, etc. We can be distracted by wealth or financial security or entertainment or prestige.

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The excerpt from Philippians reminds us that the vision of Jesus is a vision of freedom – freedom to have a lot or a little, a freedom to come to the banquet and to share the banquet – freedom to share "in the glorious riches of Jesus Christ." It is the very opposite of the spirit that leaves a large percentage of the children in the US in poverty. It is the opposite of the spirit of war and terrorism. It is the very opposite of the spirit that puts us in a world of radical economic inequality and injustice. It is the very opposite of so many of the 'ungodly' spirits around us.

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

When have you enjoyed a wonderful and all-inclusive joyous party?
In what ways did it remind you of the images of today's scriptures?
How does this image help you envision what God might want for our world?

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How does the image of the wedding feast contrast with your perception of our economic situation?

Actions - Links

Network is a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby. <http://www.networklobby.org/>

They encourage people to speak up by e-mail about issues of justice by going to <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/home/>. Unemployment is at the highest it has been in seven years. One of their current efforts is to encourage Congress to extend unemployment benefits for those who benefits are expiring.

<http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/alert/?alertid=12010616&type=CO>

A Center of Concern report, **Causes and Consequences of the Wall Street Crisis**, can be found at <http://www.coc.org/system/files/WallStreetBkg08.pdf>

“Crazy Facts”

The United States Labor Department reports that employers eliminated 159,000 jobs in September, the ninth consecutive month of job losses. There was also an increase in the number of people working part time because they couldn't find full-time work. Over 1.5 million people fell into this category in September, up from 400,000 last September.

The Children's Defense Funds reports that nearly nine million children in America do not have health coverage and millions more are underinsured.

Prayers of Intercession

Response: Lord, guide us on the road to justice for all.

For the billions of people in our world who are poor, we pray.....

For all those who are hungry this day, we pray....

For all the people who are homeless or in danger of losing their homes, we pray.....

For the millions of people who are refugees without even a nation to call home, we pray....

For the countless people who are excluded because of their ethnic or racial heritage, we pray....

For those who are overly preoccupied with their money and possession, we pray....

For our political leaders called to lead us through all the difficulties, we pray....

Prayer - Meditation

Micah 4:1-3:

"In days to come the mount of the LORD'S house Shall be established higher than the mountains; it shall rise high above the hills, And peoples shall stream to it: Many nations shall come, and say, "Come, let us climb the mount of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, That he may instruct us in his ways, that we may walk in his paths." For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples and impose terms on strong and distant nations; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

God, the mountain seems so high.

God, the path seems so steep and challenging.

God, help us to be connected to one another in a spirit of respect for all.

God, lead us to the top of the mountain of peace and justice.

Amen.