



## Godly and Faithful

### I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

#### FIRST READING (Wis 18:6-9)

<sup>6</sup>That night was known beforehand to our ancestors, so that, with sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith, they might have courage.<sup>d</sup> <sup>7</sup>The expectation of your people was the **salvation** of the righteous and the destruction of their foes.<sup>e</sup> <sup>8</sup>For by the same means with which you punished our adversaries, you **glorified** us whom you had summoned.<sup>f</sup> <sup>9</sup>For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice and carried out with one mind the divine institution,<sup>g</sup> So that your holy ones should share alike the same blessings and dangers,<sup>g</sup> once they had sung the ancestral hymns of praise.

**THE FOCUS: Salvation (Liberation)**

#### COMMENTARY

- The Reading is about the salvation or liberation of Israel.
- It is even anticipated by the patriarchs of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and 12 tribes).
- The context in which to understand the text is the Passover night (v.6), an Exodus event. The Israelites are poised to leave Egypt. Leaving Egypt means salvation of Israel and destruction of her enemies (v.7).
- Leaving Egypt is punishment for Israel's enemies, glorification of the Israelites (v.8).
- V.9 indicates a sign of liberation: offering of sacrifice, building of the people Israel.

#### REFLECTIONS

Do we experience passing over? Do we move from slavery to freedom?

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#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22)

**BLESSED THE PEOPLE THE LORD  
HAS CHOSEN TO BE HIS OWN.**

#### SECOND READING (Heb 11:1-2,8-19)

<sup>1\*</sup> **Faith** is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence\* of things not seen.

*V.1 gives a simple definition of what faith is. It is more of an end-product (a realization, actualization of hope). It also proves true the things that are intangible (those of heaven).*

<sup>2</sup>Because of it the ancients were well attested..

*The ancients here are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of the Israelites. They are remembered because of their faith.*

<sup>8g</sup>By **faith** Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

*This refers to Gen 12 when God asks him to leave his home in Haran (Mesopotamia) to go to Canaan (now Palestine). A display of total trust in God.*

<sup>9h</sup>By **faith** he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise;<sup>10i</sup> for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God.

*Abraham did not have a permanent place. He lived like a nomad (in tents) with his child Isaac and grandchild Jacob. Isaac and Jacob are sons of promise. Abraham was looking forward to a most stable place (Jerusalem).*

<sup>11j</sup>By **faith** he received power to generate, even though he was past the normal age—and Sarah herself was sterile—for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy.

*Abraham, 100 and Sarah, 90, became parents of Isaac. God cured the sterility of Sarah. God overcame human limitations. He made even old people give birth.*

<sup>12k</sup>So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

*As a result of the miraculous birth of Isaac, Abraham's descendants became numerous.*

<sup>13l</sup>All these died in **faith**.

*The patriarchs died in faith. The explanation is in the next line.*

They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth,

*In their lifetime, they did not see God fulfill his promise of many descendants and land. Children of Israel became numerous only after about 400 years. They possessed the land only after the Exodus and the desert experience in Sinai.*

<sup>14</sup>**for those who speak thus** show that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of the land from which they had come, they would have had opportunity to return.

*“for those who speak thus” may refer to those still in exile, not in the promised land. This is totally a different story. Now we talk about the exiled people who want to return to their land. Maybe it refers better to the exodus people who are aware of their roots in Canaan.*

<sup>16m</sup>But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

*The author interprets the longing of Abraham’s children. They desire a heavenly homeland, not the earthly one. Again the “city” appears. This could refer to Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem.*

<sup>17n</sup>By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, <sup>18o</sup>of whom it was said, “Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.”

*This refers to Gen 22 when God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, the son of promise, on Mt. Moriah (Jerusalem). God seems to contradict himself. How can his promise for descendants be fulfilled if he kills his only son?*

<sup>19p</sup>He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

*This is the interpretation of the author. Sounds anachronistic. Raising from the dead is a Christian concept injected into the story of Abraham.*

**THE FOCUS: Faith of Our Ancestors**

## REFLECTIONS

The author is consistent that faith makes everything possible.

## GOSPEL READING (Lk 12:32-48)

<sup>32o</sup>Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.

*Jesus addresses himself to his disciples. He assures them of God’s kingdom. God is happy to hand them in his kingdom.*

<sup>33p</sup>Sell your belongings and give alms.

*In consequence, the disciples should give up their belongings and be more charitable to the poor.*

Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.

*Since the disciples belong to the kingdom of God, they must now change their value system. They should set their minds on treasures which cannot be lost or destroyed.*

<sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

*The Christian must have proper values, those that are taught by Jesus Christ. If the Christian has learned to be spiritual, one’s heart will be the same.*

<sup>35\*</sup> <sup>q</sup>“Gird your loins and light your lamps <sup>36r</sup>and be like **servants** who await their master’s return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.

*Christians should be like smart servants, alert, always ready to welcome and serve their master whose time of his coming no one knows.*

<sup>37</sup>Blessed are those **servants** whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.

*Jesus praises the servants who are vigilant.*

Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.

*Jesus will serve them, not vice versa.*

<sup>38</sup>And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those **servants**.

*It repeats what Jesus says in v.37.*

<sup>39s</sup>Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

*As the master of the house (householder) is always vigilant, does not take chances, would not allow lapse in security of his house, so the disciples must be vigilant.*

<sup>41</sup>Then Peter said, “Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?”

*The parable refers to vv.39-40. Peter asks for clarification.*

<sup>42</sup>And the Lord replied, “Who, then, is the faithful and prudent **steward** whom the master will put in charge of his **servants** to distribute [the] food allowance at the proper time?

*Jesus indirectly answers Peter with a counter question. Here Jesus talks about faithful and prudent steward. He is the one who does his duty, delivering, distributing the needs (food) in due time.*

<sup>43</sup>Blessed is that **servant** whom his master on arrival finds doing so. <sup>44</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property.

*Jesus repeats his commendation to the servants in vv.37-38. In fact, he will be given more responsibility. The ideal servant is the one who earns total trust from his master.*

<sup>45</sup>But if that **servant** says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’\* and begins to beat the **men-servants** and the **maid-servants**, to eat and drink and get drunk, <sup>46</sup>then that **servant’s** master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful.

*V.45 portrays an irresponsible servant, who does not take vigil and becomes violent to his fellow servants and abuses food and drink.*

*V. 46 spells out his punishment by the master who comes unexpectedly.*

<sup>47</sup>That **servant** who knew his master’s will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely;

*V.47 continues to enumerate the guilt of unfaithful servant (no preparations, actions do not conform to his master’s will, did not represent him) in spite of his knowledge or being informed of his duties. His punishment is also spelled out here: to be beaten severely.*

<sup>48</sup>and the **servant** who was ignorant of his master’s will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly.

*This verse indicates another who does not know anything. There will be a little consideration for him in terms of punishment.*

Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

*This saying is the logic of Jesus. More responsibility to those who are responsible. God will entrust them with more responsibilities.*

**THE FOCUS: Servanthood**

## REFLECTIONS

To be a servant, one needs to be responsible.

## II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

The First Reading reflects on the liberation of the Israelite people, God’s servants. The Second Reading

talks about Abraham, a servant who has faith. The Gospel Reading talks about faithful and prudent servants.

### How to develop your sharing/homily

Begin by talking about servants, *katulong*, domestic helpers. Filipinos are famous for being domestic helpers here and abroad.

Experiences are both positive and negative: high salary, better working conditions, if the DH has a good employer. If not, salary withheld, passport taken away, sexually abused, humiliated.

Two kinds of domestic helpers: one is trusted, the other distrusted and irresponsible. The one trusted is also asked by the master to teach English, even prayers, to their children. The one distrusted/irresponsible is always castigated by the employer. Because the house is topsy-turvy. TV is always warm. Big pile of laundry, etc.

The Gospel Reading speaks of a true servanthood.

We Christians are all servants. Our master is God. We serve in his vineyard, in his kingdom.

God asks us to be responsible servants. We must keep busy, doing our duties and obligations. There should be no time to fool around.

As entrusted servants, we must be busy administering God’s concerns: to give food in due time. We do not allow hunger to step in our house.

As servants, we must have the following characteristics: faithful, prudent, hard working, focused on the affairs of God, vigilant, pro-active (does not allow thieves to come in), liberative (First Reading), able to live by faith (Second Reading).

If we do well as servants, more responsibilities will be given us. Responsible servants create time for everything.

For the lazy one, one will not act even on one assignment. One will complain one has no time. This kind of servant cannot be entrusted with anything.

The eucharist is a meal of servants.

Jesus is our servant and host. He waits on us to respond generously to his call. In the eucharist, we find rest from our labors. Jesus consoles us, strengthens us in our difficulties and shortcomings as servants.

In the eucharist, he supports us to become good and faithful servants.

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## III. OUR CONTEXT

1. How do I exercise my own responsibilities as a church worker in my parish? (HM)