

# God Invites Us, Come...

## I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

### FIRST READING (Is 50:5-9)

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD opened my ear;/ I did not refuse,/ did not turn away./<sup>6</sup> I gave my back to those who beat me,/ my cheeks to those who tore out my beard;/<sup>7</sup> My face I did not hide/ from insults and spitting./<sup>8</sup> The Lord GOD is my help,/ therefore I am not disgraced;/ Therefore I have set my face like flint,/ knowing that I shall not be put to shame./<sup>9</sup> He who declares my innocence is near./ Who will oppose me?/ Let us appear together./ Who will dispute my right?/ Let them confront me./

<sup>9</sup>See, the Lord GOD is my help;/ who will declare me guilty?/ See, they will all wear out like a garment,/ consumed by moths.<sup>e</sup>

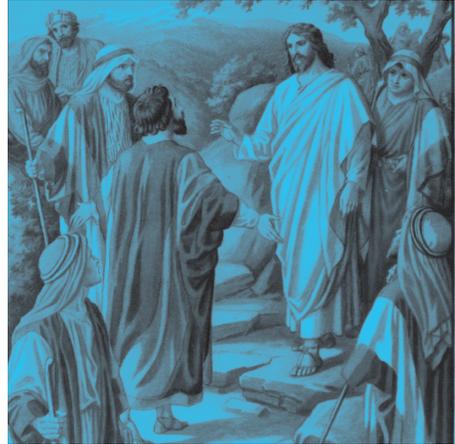
**THE FOCUS: The Help of God**

### COMMENTARY

- Written during the Babylonian Exile (586-537 BCE), this second book of Isaiah (also called Deutero-Isaiah) gives hope and consolation to the exiled Jews (Jews in diaspora).
- The underlined words relate how they wrestle with their harsh situation in Babylon.
- But God comes to their help.
- God who fights for the exile is at hand:
  - Who can contend with me?
  - Who is my adversary?
  - Who will declare me guilty?
- God helps the ones who suffer persecution.

### REFLECTIONS

When God is on our side, we do not fear; we fight for what is right.



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**RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9)**  
**I WILL WALK BEFORE THE LORD,  
IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.**

### SECOND READING (Jas 2:14-18)

<sup>14</sup>\* What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has **faith** but does not have **works**? Can that **faith** save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? <sup>17</sup>So also **faith** of itself, if it does not have **works**, is dead.

<sup>18</sup>Indeed someone might say, “You have **faith** and I have **works**.” Demonstrate your **faith** to me without **works**, and I will demonstrate my **faith** to you from my **works**.

**THE FOCUS: On Faith and Works**

**COMMENTARY**

- Is not this our favorite passage when some of our friends tell us that faith alone saves?
- Faith without works is useless. It is nothing!
- Work here means giving justice to the poor, sensitivity to their needs.
- Faith and works are inseparable.
- The author of James is well aware that proper conduct can only come about with an authentic commitment to God in faith (Jas 2:18, 26)

**REFLECTIONS**

Faith is connected to the other theological virtue that is love. For when one believes, one really loves one’s neighbor.

Faith is my response to God’s generosity, to God’s offer of salvation.

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**GOSPEL READING** (Mk 8:27-35)

**Setting, question and answer**

<sup>27\*</sup> <sup>h</sup>Now Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that **I am**?” <sup>28</sup>They said in reply, “John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets.” <sup>29</sup>And he asked them, “But who do you say that **I am**?” Peter said to him in reply,

“You are the **Messiah**.” <sup>30</sup>Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

**Destiny of the Son of Man**

<sup>31</sup>He began to teach them that the Son of Man\* must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. <sup>32</sup>He spoke this openly.

**Rebuke of Peter**

Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

**THE FOCUS: The Identity of Jesus**

**COMMENTARY**

- This is the key text of the gospel of Mark.
- We learn about the identity of Jesus in this reading. With Jesus, initiative, we hear the first proclamation.
- Messiah comes from the hebrew word *messiach*, meaning anointed. The image is that oil is pour upon the head of the one who is chosen.
- In the Old Testament, there are three classes of people who are anointed, the priests, the prophets and the kings.
- What do other people say about Jesus?
- Who is the one who says Jesus is the anointed, the Messiah, the Christ? Why is he able to say so?
- Perhaps because of their experiences with Jesus.
- But is their concept of Messiah same as Jesus’ idea of Messiah? No.
- There seems to be a vague idea. Which of the three anointed would they mean? King, prophet or priest?
- The next chapters and verses after Peter’s confession will tell us that this Messiah



is willing to make himself as an offering. Thus crucifixion will happen. What does this entail of us, his followers?

**REFLECTIONS**

Yes, there are moments when we are rebuked by Jesus because we become stumbling block to the faith of others.

Sometimes, we cause others to sin when we just think of ourselves and not of others.

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touched you by really communicating with you in the intimate moment, revealing to you how well He knows you.

Ask yourself then, how well do you know Jesus? And what are the moments or ways of relating that deepen our relationship with Jesus/God.

Continue to reflect on how you try to convince others that they too have to cultivate their faith by also witnessing to others, thus making their faith grow even as it is really God who plants the seeds of faith in us.

Tell a story of one who is active in propagating God’s Word in your community or parish, not to be recognized but that others may recognize God’s Word.

Exhort everybody to be involved as Jesus really has involved Himself with us in our daily undertaking.

End with the image of eucharist: a God who celebrates with us not to just to nourish us, but also IS the nourishment that makes life possible.

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

The help of God comes, and God declares the victim or the suffering one, innocent (First Reading). This is true in the person of Jesus. The Gospel reveals the identity of Jesus: the Messiah who will, after the profession of Peter, undergo suffering. Jesus faith in God is also manifested in his works. No wonder he accepts suffering voluntarily and offers himself like a sacrifice. Thus we as followers of Jesus have to live out our faith in Him. This must be manifested in our works of making others live (Second Reading).

**Proposal for the homily/sharing**

Begin with ways that tell you how well your parents know you. Example what food they prepare when you arrive for a visit (when you already live away from them). Or what *pasalubong* (gifts) they usually bring because they know these gifts really please you. Compare this with moments when Jesus

**III. OUR CONTEXT**

1. September 21, Feast Day of St. Matthew the Evangelist.
2. Invite a lay leader to share one’s mission in your bible-study group.
3. What is your reaction when Born-Again Christians ask you, “Have you received Jesus as personal Savior?” Discuss.
4. We Filipinos are really called to be religiously musical. What are the rituals that attract you. How do you deepen the theological meaning of these rituals.
5. In our Philippine history, recall people who offered intense sacrifices so that our country or many of our compatriots would enjoy freedom.

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