

### “Behold the Land of God who takes away the sin of the world”

By: Fr. Mike Bayard S.J.

Every Sunday we hear these words at the breaking of the bread . . . Do we actually believe them . . .? Christ comes to us in the Eucharist to break open his life . . .

- 1) To take away the oppression and division we harbor in our hearts toward ourselves.
- 2) To take away the oppression and the division that we can harbor toward each other.
- 3) To gather us together – giving us His life and fulfilling His righteousness . . . to bring us and the world life . . . freedom . . . salvation . . . and wholeness.

#### “Behold the Lamb of God who takes the away the sin of the world.”

Do we or the world actually allow those words to penetrate our hearts? Are we or the world actually able to recognize that this is the one who eases all division?

Perhaps not if our sight is just focused on ourselves:

- 1) We are blind when we compromise God's will for us by allowing ourselves to get caught up in how the world defines who we are . . .
- 2) We are blind when we do not accept another person because of race, creed, language, religious belief, and sexual orientation.
- 3) Our world is blind to Lamb of God in our midst when it promotes a cultural vision that places the individual over and above others . . . a vision that looks out for self rather than the good of the community.

When our sight is only directed inward on ourselves we can miss the Lamb of God in our midst . . . This sin of division severs us and blinds us from the life and love of God . . . This is what essentially happened at the community in Corinth. Paul is writing to the community at Corinth that is blind to the Spirit in their midst. There were factions and divisions within it and people fighting . . . Within their Church were the Jews who understood what it meant to be the chosen ones, but also in their Church were the Gentiles, who were just beginning to understand what it meant to be part of the chosen people . . . Paul wrote this letter in response to reports about these divisions . . . and he writes to point out to them that

God's spirit is in their midst . . . God's spirit is there in their midst to bring unity in their diversity. To help them recognize that all of their gifts together help to build unity. Paul writes to remind them of their connections; the ties that binds them.

Namely, through their salvation in Christ they are bound to God . . . Christ came in their midst not to save just the Jewish people, but God came into their midst to save them all. God through Christ has give them all the knowledge, gifts, and salvation that they cherish. Through Christ they are called into the fellowship of the church. And they are bound together by God's love . . . Paul's greeting announces the theme of this letter: peace and unity in Christ. Paul points out to them the Lamb of God in their midst.

John points toward the one who brings the message of God's righteousness – freedom, salvation and wholeness . . .

#### Behold the Lamb of the God who takes away the sin of the world.

He is the one, Jesus, who walks into the heart of the world to free it from the sin that binds itself.

Tomorrow we celebrate the life of Martin Luther King . . . a man whose life pointed the the Lamb of God and witnessed to the Lamb of God in our midst . . . A man had a dream of reconciliation and a dream of unity between all of God's children.

We, too, by our baptism are called to witness to the Lamb of God, to bring God's tender, compassionate, and merciful love to those who are marginalized, outcast, and in need in our society. When we come to this table to receive Christ's body and blood we come with confidence and faith to receive the Lamb of God, who comes into our midst as bread and wine, and as brother and sister whom we encounter when we walk outside those church doors.

#### “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sing of the world.”

## READINGS OF THE WEEK

Isaiah 49:3-6

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

January 19, 2014

# 靈 修 生 活

## 看！ 除 免 世 罪 的 天 主 羔 羊

陳 日 君 樞 機 主 教

耶穌受洗瞻禮替代了常年期第一主日，所以這個主日是常年期第二主日了。不過我們已提過，耶穌受洗瞻禮原來是主顯節的伸延。如果我們比較一下這主日和以後各主日的福音，我們可以說這個主日還是「捨不得」放下主顯節的主題，還未有「決心」進入常年期的讀經安排。從常年期第三主日開始，甲年連續讀瑪竇福音，乙年讀馬爾谷福音，丙年讀路加福音，而且這個第二主日卻甲、乙、丙年都用若望福音的第一、第二章(丙年的福音述說加納婚筵，這就是主顯節所記念的第三件事跡)。

在今天的福音裡，教會借若翰的口再次向我們「顯示」耶穌是誰。祂是除免世罪的天主羔羊。若翰從將臨期禱在禮儀戲台上擔任重要的角色，現在暫離戲台時，講出了這關鍵性的台詞：「看，天主的羔羊，除免世罪者。」

當然這台詞是若望所編寫的。在若望心目中，「羔羊」代表甚麼？我們可以從他寫的默示錄中看出來。若望在神視中見到那「羔羊」是「唯一當得起接受那書卷和開啟它封印的。因為祂曾被宰殺，曾用祂的血從各支派、各言語、各民族、各邦國中，把人贖來歸於天主」(默 5:9)。若望在福音中刻意指出耶穌死後，他們「沒有打斷祂的腿」，而這正應驗了經上關於逾越節羔羊的規定：「不可將祂的骨頭折斷」(若 19:36; 出 12:46)。

這羔羊是代罪的羔羊，在依撒以亞書第四首「上主僕人」的詩歌裡說得特別清楚。(其實按阿拉美文，「僕人和「羔羊」是同根詞。)

「他被刺透是因了我們的悖逆；他被打傷是因了我們的罪惡」。「上主把我們眾人的罪過歸到祂身上。」正如保祿在格後 5:21 所說：「天主曾使那不認識罪的替我們成了罪，好叫我們在祂內成為天主的正義。」「祂為承擔大眾的罪過，作罪犯的中保，犧牲了自己的性命，至於死亡，被列於罪犯之中。」(依 53:5-6,12)。

今日的第一篇讀經是依撒以亞書第二首「上主僕人」的詩歌。正如若望在默示錄中，這首詩歌強調的是「上主僕人」和「羔羊」的勝利和光榮。祂的犧牲除免了「全世界」的罪，祂是「萬民的光明」，「祂的救恩達於地極」。

若翰說：「我見了，我作證。」作證也是教會的使命。世世代代的信徒，尤其是殉道者和傳教士都為這「除免世罪的羔羊」作了見證。

神父在送聖體前高舉了祝聖的麩餅說：「請看，天主的羔羊！請看，除免世罪者！」我們是否如若翰一樣體驗到天主子的臨在？神父說「基督聖體」時，我們的回應「亞孟」是否出於心靈深處？主，我相信是祢救了我，救了全世界每一個人。祢現在把救恩的聖寵再次帶到我心裡來。求祢讓我體驗祢的臨在，並助我在生活中為祢作出見證。

教會的見證是集體性的。教會要忠於她的本質才能作出有效的見證。

今日第二篇讀經是唯一進入常年期安排的；從這主日開始，我們會連續誦讀聖保祿致格林多人前書。

格林多教會，正如現代大都市的教會，面對不少問題。今天我們讀的是格前的致候與感謝辭。在這開場白裡，保祿已暗示該書信的主題和中心思想，即基督妙身的教會是至一、至聖、至公的，這道理已說明教會中分黨、分派是多麼不當。

教會的共融，信徒的合一，最能給世界顯示「除免世罪的天主羔羊」已在我們中間。

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