

## Homily for The Second Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year A) (19/01/20)

The Prophet Isaiah is speaking in the name of the Lord. Israel has been chosen by him as his servant, but now there is more: 'It is not enough...' Just being the Lord's servant is not enough; just restoring the tribes of Jacob is not enough; just bringing back the survivors of Israel is not enough, there is something more.

It seems to me that this phrase 'It is not enough' is a constant refrain in the way that God deals with his people. Everything that he gives us, everything that he creates for us, constantly he wants to give us more. God creates heaven and earth, waters and dry land, lights in the sky and fish in the sea, flying creatures and animals on land, but after every step he concludes 'It is not enough' and there must be something more. So he creates man in his own image, to tend and to cultivate his garden of delight; but still he concludes it is not enough; it is not good for the man to be alone, and so he creates woman to be loved by him and to love him. The creation story is driven on by those words. God's will to create something delightful is constantly driven forward by his passion for more, and more, and more.

As the Prophet Isaiah realized, the people of Israel were chosen by God to be his own, to serve him and to give him glory. But this is not enough, there is so much more that they can do. They can be a magnetic light, a light that draws other people towards it, draws them out of the darkness of their lives into the beauty of living in the presence of the Holy One. Israel had a role to perform, but on its own it was not enough, there was something more. In fact, the message of all the prophets could be summed up as 'it is not enough'. God sees how the people settle for something less than the best, for a life that is less than it could be, less joyful, less rewarding, less delightful, and the prophets proclaim 'It is not enough; God wants something more for you'.

The birth of Christ, his life and his death and his resurrection, these all return to the same theme: It is not enough. The prophets are not enough. It isn't enough to tell you how you should organize your lives if you want to find peace and fulfillment and happiness, now the Son of God will show you. It isn't enough to talk about God's power over sin, and his power over death, you are going to be shown what that power really looks like. Again and again, throughout the history of God's dealings with his people, the same refrain returns. He will give us something more: something better.

In many ways this is not just the story of the history of God's dealings with his people, it is the lived and present reality of how he deals with us now, every day, in our ordinary lives.

It is not enough that we should be treated as children of God, that he should act as if we were his children: we will in fact, in reality, become his children through the Sacrament of Baptism.

It is not enough that we should know that God is forgiving and merciful, we will have something more, we will hear a voice that is, for this moment, God's voice proclaiming our forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It is not enough that the sick and the dying should know that God loves them, they will hear a voice proclaim it, and they will feel the gentle touch of a hand that is, for this moment, the hand of the wounded Saviour, reaching out to them with infinite tenderness in the Sacrament of the sick.

It is not enough that we should believe that Christ gave his life to save us, and that he gives himself to feed and sustain us; we will be present at that offering of himself in Mass, and we will receive that food which unites us completely to him.

All of the sacraments are God's proclamation that whatever we may think about God, the truth is always something more: more touching, more liberating, more beautiful. Whatever we hope for from God, whatever we hope that life may give us, God's answer is always the same: that may be very good, but it is not enough, my hope is for you to have more.

John the Baptist was a great prophet. He prepared a way for the Lord, he opened people's hearts to realize their need of a Saviour. But that was not enough, God had something more to give them. John was preparing them for something better. He was helping them to see what was missing in their lives, so that they could recognize it when it was offered to them. Today's Gospel reading shows John pointing people away from himself and towards Jesus.

The great Good News of today's scriptures is, whatever we hope for, whatever we feel we need, God hopes and dreams for something better still. Our dreams of a fulfilled life are just not big enough. He wants something more for us. When life seems hard, or dull, or tiring, or unrewarding; or when it seems confusing, or challenging, or disappointing, we should hold on to this truth. This is not enough. God's dreams for us are something better. The role of the Church is to help us discover those beautiful dreams, and having discovered them to help us dare to follow them. Whenever we are tempted to settle for something less, we might remind ourselves of these words of Isaiah. Great as the purpose Israel thought it had, it was not enough. God offered something more.