



Homily Helps on Immigration January and February, 2014 from the Joint Immigration Venture



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 26, 2014

Is. 8:23-9:3, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...”

Matt. 4:12-23, “The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light...”

Many of us have experienced darkness – at night, poor eye sight, not knowing, uncertainty, etc. *Many people but especially immigrants live, walk and sit figuratively in darkness because their options remain limited and their ability to live out their lives in its fullness are severely restricted. The National Migration Week this month had the theme, “Out of the Darkness.” Our challenge is for us is to bring light in the ways that we can.*

1 Cor. 1:10-13,17, “I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.”

Maybe this gives us a hint – to be really brothers and sisters to our immigrants, to be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. We find this really difficult -- but this is the call as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.



The Presentation of the Lord – February 2, 2014

Luke 2:32, “A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

We hear today about two people – Simeon and Anne - who are wise in responding to Jesus, the vulnerable baby. They can speak to Mary and Joseph. Simeon had the Holy Spirit upon him to be able to recognize Jesus as a baby and taking him into his arms. Can we also recognize the vulnerable immigrants? Anne lived 7 years with her husband and then a widow until she was 84 years. She knew aloneness and this helped her to recognize the child – the vulnerable one. Do we see the vulnerable ones among us? Do we know who they are?



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time – February 9, 2014

Isaiah 58:7-10, “Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them and do not turn your back on your own.”

Isaiah truly gives us a message from the Lord: "...Shelter the oppressed and the homeless...." We are called to remember those who do not have basic needs – food, shelter, clothes, etc... Who do you know who have these needs? 1000 people are deported every day and therefore families are separated every day. Many families do not have money earners to get basic needs for their families.

Matthew 5:13-16, "You are the salt of the earth.....You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden."

What does it mean to be salt or light to another? Isaiah gives us a hint – sharing food, not turning our back on others. This can really be the "salt" and the "light" that we hear in the Gospel. How can you make a difference for others as the salt and the light in their lives this week?



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — February 16, 2014

Psalm 119:...18,33-34, "Open my eyes, that I may consider the wonders of your law.... Instruct me, O Lord, in the way of your statutes...Give me discernment that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart."

The Psalm 119 gives us a way to look on the law of God. "Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord." The Psalm gives us clear direction in how to follow God and follow sharing with our brothers and sisters. Open my eyes..... Instruct me, Lord..... Give me discernment. We really need to see God in each other– but also in our brothers and sisters – immigrants. We need to discern what to do for others – how do we care for others. This is the way we keep the law with all our hearts.



Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – February 23, 2014

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18, "You shall not bear hatred for your brother or sister in your heart..... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

Matthew 5:38-48 "You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes the sun rise on the bad and good...."

If we listen to the TV, to songs and other media.... "Love" is really central..... but when we listen to the readings today, we are told not to hate, in fact we are to love our enemies.... What would happen to our country if we would really take this seriously. Of course, even if we take this seriously, it is very challenging to do. What difference would this make with people we do not understand? How would we respond to other? At least we would pray for them. The immigrants in our country would be in a different situation if we took this to heart.

Matthew 5:47-48, "And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that?"

This Gospel calls us to greet everyone -- men and women, different religious groups and immigrants. It is a way to begin... Greet one another.