



First Reading

1 Tm 6:2-12

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to Timothy

As a person dedicated to God, you must be just.

This is what you are to teach the brothers to believe and persuade them to do. Anyone who teaches anything different, and does not keep to the sound teaching which is that of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which is in accordance with true religion, is simply ignorant and must be full of self-conceit – with a craze for questioning everything and arguing about words. All that can come of this is jealousy, contention, abuse and wicked mistrust of one another; and unending disputes by people who are neither rational nor informed and imagine that religion is a way of making a profit. Religion, of course, does bring large profits, but only to those who are content with what they have. We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it; but as long as we have food and clothing, let us be content with that. People who long to be rich are a prey to temptation; they get trapped into all sorts of foolish and dangerous ambitions which eventually plunge them into ruin and destruction. 'The love of money is the root of all evils' and there are some who, pursuing it, have wandered away from the faith, and so given their souls any number of fatal wounds.

But, as a man dedicated to God, you must avoid all that. You must aim to be saintly and religious, filled with faith and love, patient and gentle. Fight the good fight of the faith and win for yourself the eternal life to which you were called when you made your profession and spoke up for the truth in front of many witnesses.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 48:6-10. 17-20. R. Mt 5:3

(R.) Happy the poor in spirit;
the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

1. Why should I fear in evil days
the malice of the foes who surround me,
men who trust in their wealth,
and boast of the vastness of their riches? (R.)
2. For no man can buy his own ransom,
or pay a price to God for his life.
The ransom of his soul is beyond him.
He cannot buy life without end,
nor avoid coming to the grave. (R.)
3. Then do not fear when a man grows rich,
when the glory of his house increases.
He takes nothing with him when he dies,
his glory does not follow him below. (R.)
4. Though he flattered himself while he lived:
'Men will praise me for doing well for myself,'
yet he will go to join his fathers,
who will never see the light any more. (R.)

Gospel

Lk 8:1-3

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

There were women with them who provided for them out of their own resources.

Jesus made his way through towns and villages preaching, and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God. With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and several others who provided for them out of their own resources.

Reflection - Fr John Lovell

If we are to be a true sign of the Lord's unity and peace to the world, we can't afford to be divided by any sort of faction or political in-fighting. This is essentially what the Apostle Paul and his colleague Timothy in today's First Reading are trying to impress on both members of their early Christian communities 2000 years ago and us today.

We need to be united as one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church under our one God-appointed Head, the Pope, the Vicar of Christ. The term 'vicar' means one who acts on behalf of another. The Vicar of Christ, our Pope, acts on behalf of Christ. We may not always understand or feel completely comfortable with some of the sayings and teachings of Pope Francis, yet it's important we never oppose or seek to turn others against him. There are probably few positions on Earth more difficult than his. He relies very much on our support and our prayers.

As Catholics, the single greatest sign of our unity is the Eucharist: our active sharing in the life and mission of Jesus through our participation in His Body and Blood in the sacrifice of the Mass. Thus, we are called one body in Christ.

And more broadly as Christians, we also need to do our best to be united with all Christian people, regardless of their denomination, which we do by focusing not on our differences but on those many things we share in common, which include our belief in: Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, the Bible (the Word of God), Baptism, prayer, the Creed and our quest for full Christian unity. Beyond this, we remember our need for peace and unity with all people regardless of politics, background or religion by focusing on those essential things President Kennedy spoke of almost 60 years ago, "For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal". All these things give us a framework for unity.

We pray that our Diocesan Synod, our National Plenary Council and the forthcoming Synod on Synodality in Rome in 2023, will further enhance our unity and not strain it. Church is about journeying together as the family of God, a journey that began thousands of years ago, has taken us into many new lands and cultures, exposed us to new customs, languages and ways of living, learning and praying together, and under the ongoing guidance of the Spirit, will ultimately lead us to our eternal home.