

## MISSION OF CHRIST!

As we step even deeper into the season of Advent, we naturally begin to ask ourselves about the one who is to come and his mission. The Jews had their own expectations and description of who the Messiah would be and what he will finally do for them. They were more than convinced that when the Messiah comes, he will physically and militarily throw out the Roman presence and their rule among the Jewish people. This is why there was a lot of expectation and joy when John the Baptist appeared. The Leadership in Jerusalem had Priests and Levites quickly sent to ask John about this. *Who are you? Are you Elijah?* From these kinds of questions, one would see the urgency and panic from the messengers. They insisted that they had to take the answer back to their authorities. And so, they insisted that he had to say something about himself.

John is subjected to this long and severe examination because the Jews, especially the authorities, want to know what kind of a Messiah is to come and what his mission will be as he goes about his messianic business. John seemingly has very little idea about the agenda of the coming Messiah. All he knows is that the Messiah will come with a new Spirit and fire. He will be greater than John and he would not even be fit to go near to undo his sandal-strap.

The First Reading on the other hand defines, in unambiguous terms, the mission of the Messiah and who this Messiah would be. Isaiah says that the one to come will be full of the Spirit and anointed by the Spirit. His mission will be to *bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners.* This is a message of life and liberation to sustain every believer's hope.

In other words, the one who is coming will bring true peace and justice for all. Jesus himself affirms this mission statement from Isaiah's prophecy and definitively declares that *today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.* (Luke. 4:21). Jesus' mission in the world is to bring the very Spirit of God, the very life of God into the world, which is the Spirit of peace and the Spirit of justice.

There is no way we can reconcile with one another if there is no justice. And it is almost impossible to have peace when justice is absent. Even development remains illusive unless we are treating each other fairly and justly. We are all called to build our lives, our institutions and our nations on the principles of fairness and justice so that our societies may achieve social justice.

From the mission of Christ in Isaiah, salvation takes on a much deeper meaning than just a spiritual reality. Salvation is about saving the entire person in all areas of human and spiritual endeavors. Salvation therefore is not just about the world to come but is also about the world we live in. Salvation is not just about how we will sing *holy, holy* in the world to come. Salvation is also about how we relate to one another, how we treat one another and above

of our society, the poor, the oppressed, abused, the  
our communities, in our country so that everyone begins  
more fulfilling.

If there is oppression, and miscarriage of justice in the communities we live, then there is a different Spirit which is contrary to the Spirit and mission of Christ. Jesus himself spent time to minister to his own brothers and sisters, especially those who were the poorest of the poor and the most wounded among them. He cared not just for their souls but also for their human needs.

Our calling as Christians is to witness to this mission and to stand for the oppressed and to live our lives which are not oppressive. We are indeed the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The *Lineamenta* for the Second African Synod (#64) reminds us of this mission as Christians to the world:

Because the laity have a major role in the Church and its mission to the world, their contribution to the work towards reconciliation, peace and justice is essential. To fight all forms of discrimination; to build society on the principle of equality and equity.

The Spirit of the Lord can only be with us if we do not oppress the women, the orphans, our workers, the old, the disabled, and all the weakest members of our society. We can then begin to challenge other structures and regimes which thrive on oppression and injustice.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING IN SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

- What is your definition of justice? What unjust practices happen in your community?
- Was the pardon given to the thief on the cross fair and just? If yes, why do you say so?
- In what way do I experience justice and/or injustice in the Church and what steps can we take as a Church to promote justice?

#### SKETCH

Have someone to act as a young man who sees that very young girls in his community are being married off by their parents or guardians and the money is used to send their brothers to school. He believes that females and males have the right to equal treatment but he has no courage to challenge the community. He prays to God for courage and manages to convince some families about the injustices done to girls. The families are happy and also join him in challenging early marriages.

#### COMMUNITY PRAYERS

- Lord, we ask you to grant us the grace to treat every human person with respect as we were all made in your own image, *Lord, hear our prayer! Lord graciously hear us!*
- Lord, we pray that our leaders in every sphere of life find ways to pursue peaceful solutions to issues of justice, *Lord, hear our prayer! Lord graciously hear us!*
- Lord, in healing and forgiveness you wipe away our tears, help us to be a sign of healing within the brokenness around us, *Lord, hear our prayer! Lord graciously hear us!*