

## Commentary on the Readings for July 10, 2022

### The 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The theme of the readings for today is contained in the response that Jesus gives to the scholar who questions him on how to obtain eternal life. Jesus does not say "**what is written in the Law,**" but rather how does the scholar feel in his heart about his path to salvation and eternal life. **The basic laws of God are written in our heart.** We call this the "moral law" and it applies to everyone, as we shall see in the first reading.

The **First Reading** is from the *Book of Deuteronomy (30:10- 14)*. Deuteronomy was written by a group of faithful Jews in the northern kingdom of Israel in the 9th century BC. These faithful were concerned over the moral and spiritual degradation of the people in the days after David and Solomon. They gathered into a new Book all the teachings of Moses plus other exhortations and customs that had developed over the years in hopes of getting the people to return to the teachings of Moses and to the God of Israel. Now, if you read this passage again you will see how it fits into the theme for today and every day. Unfortunately, the Jewish people did not take this new Book seriously until after they experienced the Babylonian Exile. Then it became the basis for modern Judaism. Is today's society heading down the same path as that of the early Jews?

The **Responsorial Psalm** is (*69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37*). This psalm is a lamentation similar to Psalm 51, the great penitential psalm, where the psalmist admits his sinfulness and asks for pardon and peace, and promises an offering of praise and thanksgiving. This could easily have been a prayer that one of the *Deuteronomists* might have prayed, or anyone who has come to realize his or her lowliness and asks for God's mercy and forgiveness.

The **Second Reading** is *from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians (1:15- 20)*. This passage is a Christology similar to the Creed we say at each Sunday Mass. It also ties into the Gospel reading and could suffice as an answer given to the scholar's question. The point being made here is that we have no need for written laws, rules or regulations, that Christ is all we need and in Him resides all truth and love, which is the fullness of life. What more do we need?

The **Gospel Reading** is from the *Gospel of St Luke (10:25-37)*. In this reading we have the familiar story we call "*The Good Samaritan.*" Unfortunately, we have a natural tendency to dismiss this as being something that "wouldn't happen today" or that today's social circumstances would make this "too dangerous" a situation to get involved in. Also, we take the term "neighbor" too legalistically and think only in terms of the neighbors on our street. Jesus' point here is that our "neighbor" is anyone with whom we come in contact, especially one needing help, regardless of who it is, where he or she comes from, or how they got to this point. Remember the "Samaritan" in this story was a despised foreigner to the Jew; yet it didn't prevent him from offering aid and assistance. Could we do the same?

These scripture passages challenge us to re-think our moral and spiritual values and observances. Are they in line with what God is telling us through His Son, Jesus? Think back to the last time someone asked you for help. How did you respond? Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

**MFB**