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YOU ARE GOOD

by Mr. Meryll Justimbaste
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on our prejudices about them. Sadly, this disbelief in self could come from our own home or circle wherein the people close to us are the first ones to doubt the things we could accomplish. As a result, this develops an attitude of quitting on ourselves without even trying. Many times, it takes believing in someone that we discover great things in life. When I set aside the judgment that I had towards the BJMP detainees, I was able to discover the beauty and the lessons their stories offered me. Till now, I am sharing those great stories with my students.

This message does not only speak about us believing in someone and what they can do. It also speaks of believing in ourselves and becoming witnesses of the greatness that we have discovered. Seeing the goodness of Jesus' heart, the disciples became witnesses and developed the confidence to continue his mission and work of salvation. So, however hopeless our situation may be, we can still discover its beauty if only we are kinder to ourselves and believe in what we can do and are able to accomplish. This is an invitation for us to see the goodness in our hearts and have the confidence to make a difference in our own small worlds.

So, if there is anything good coming from this world, by God's love and grace, it is you. You are capable. You are beautiful. You are good.

Some years ago, I did an Apostolate with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Pagbilao, Quezon Province. During the orientation before our encounter with the detainees, we were told not to believe the things they would tell us because most of these were untrue, made up to convince us of their innocence. This stereotype made such an impression on me that I was doubting the inmates even before they told me their stories. Their words seemed meaningless however life-affirming they were—not until I learned how to listen to them without prejudice.

The interactions we find in the Gospel today teach us a lesson about not allowing ourselves to be consumed by our prejudices. When Philip tells Nathanael about Jesus,

his response is, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" This question seems to tell us about the reputation of those coming from Nazareth, and Nathanael, aware of such a stereotype, cannot help but doubt that the one written about by Moses and the prophets would come from that place. However, his encounter with Jesus changes his impression of him. Imagine, if Nathanael refused the invitation of his friend Philip to come and see Jesus just because of his prejudice, he would not witness the greater things Jesus would do.

Sometimes our inability to see great things in life is the product not just of certain actions, but also of the inactions due to the stereotypes we set for others. People have the tendency to limit their possibilities based

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 112 (111):4)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

A light has risen in the darkness for the upright of heart; the Lord is generous, merciful and just.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—The calling of Nathanael reminds us that Jesus is the one who sees us rather than we who see him. It is our being seen by Jesus that opens our eyes and makes us see the true person of Jesus. Jesus is always the initiator of our relationship with him. We seek him not because we see him but because he has already awakened that innermost desire in us.

Penitential Act

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Cast your kindly light upon your faithful, Lord, we pray, and with the splendor of your glory set their hearts ever aflame, that they may never cease to acknowledge their Savior and may truly hold fast to him.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (1 Jn 3:11-21) *(Sit)*

John reminds us that we should love one another. Love is our key to eternal life.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

BELOVED: This is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another, unlike Cain who belonged to the Evil One and slaughtered his brother. Why did he slaughter him? Because his own works were evil, and those of his brother righteous. Do not be amazed, then, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 100)

R—Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

1. Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful song. **(R)**

2. Know that the LORD is God; he made us, his we are; his people, the flock he tends. **(R)**

3. The LORD is good: the LORD, whose kindness endures forever, and his faithfulness, to all generations. **(R)**

Verse before the Gospel *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. A holy day has dawned upon us. Come, you nations, and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 1:43-51)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS decided to go to Galilee, and he found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth." But Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Here is a true child of Israel.

There is no duplicity in him." Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you believe because I told

you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." And he said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you will see the sky opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Let us put our trust in God and call upon him who is greater than our hearts and knows everything. For every petition, we say:

R—Lord, hear our prayer.

C—Like Philip who has no duplicity in him, may our leaders guide and serve the people with honesty and integrity of heart. We pray. **(R)**

C—May we hearken the call of the Lord and also invite others to follow him. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we open our eyes to the good things the Lord provides for us in this life and hope for the greater things he has in store for us in the life to come. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we show ourselves as stewards of creation and care for the Earth, our common home. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord listen in kindness to our prayers and attend to our brothers and sisters who are oppressed by pain, distress, and other afflictions. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—O God, listen to our petitions and grant that the faith which we confess with our lips may also speak through our manner of life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Presentation of the Gifts *(Stand)*

P—Pray, brethren...

**All—May the Lord accept
accept the sacrifice at your
hands for the praise and glor
y of his name, for our good
and the good of all his holy
Church.**

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Receive with favor, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface II *(The Nativity of the Lord)*

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and ever ywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For on the feast of this awe-filled mystery, though invisible in his own divine nature, he has appeared visibly in ours; and begotten before all ages, he has begun to exist in time; so that, raising up in himself all that was cast down, he might restore unity to all creation and call straying humanity back to the heavenly Kingdom.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration, we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation *(Stand)*

**All—We proclaim your Death,
O Lord, and profess your
Resurrection until you come
again.**

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom...

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God...

**All—Lord, I am not worthy that
you should enter under my
roof, but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. 1 Jn 4:9)

**By this the love of God was
revealed to us: God sent his
Only Begotten Son into the
world, so that we might have
life through him.**

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who touch us through our partaking of your Sacrament, work, we pray, the effects of its power in our hearts, that we may be made fit to receive your gift through this very gift itself.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow for the blessing. *(Pause)*

Be gracious to your people, O Lord, and do not withhold consolation on earth from those you call to strive for heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.



PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART *of Jesus*

Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petition/s).*

To whom can I turn if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to you, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted,

protection when persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled in and by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity for those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. **Amen.**

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