

# Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

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## **“Taste and See the Lord”**

Dear brothers and sisters, only by truly knowing can one share an experience. What we have not experienced ourselves, we cannot proclaim with conviction. Today's Readings invite us to reflect on this truth and challenges us to ask: Do I really know the Lord whom I proclaim?

In the First Reading from the Prophet Isaiah, God describes the mission of the Servant. This mission is not limited to one nation or one people. The Servant is called to be a light not only for Israel but also for the Gentiles, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth. This passage reminds us of our own vocation in the Church today. As people of God, we are called to carry the Light, Jesus Christ, and to spread God's saving love wherever we are: in our families, in our communities, and in the world around us.

In the Second Reading, from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Paul introduces himself as an apostle called by God. He then reminds the Christian community in Corinth that they are sanctified in Christ Jesus and are called to be saints; that they are not ordinary people living an ordinary life, but are set apart by God for a holy purpose through their relationship with Jesus. This call is not only for the Corinthians - it is for each one of us. Through our baptism, we too are called, sanctified, and sent.

In the Gospel, we encounter John the Baptist, who reveals the Saviour to the world. John had three important missions: he was the forerunner who prepared the way; the baptizer who called people to repentance; and the proclaimer who would point and identify Christ out to all. What is striking is how John speaks about Jesus: “This is the one of whom I said...” and “I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.” John proclaims Jesus with such clarity and confidence not because Jesus was his cousin, but because he knew Him deeply. He had experienced Him personally. Only from such a profound experience could John reveal Jesus as the Saviour of the world.



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Dear brothers and sisters, this third mission of John the Baptist - to proclaim Christ - is now entrusted to every baptized believer. We are called to proclaim Jesus not only with our words but through our lives. To do this, we must first have a close and living relationship with Him.

Let me give you a simple example: If I want to know the taste of a particular food, I must first eat it. Without tasting it, I cannot speak about it with any certainty. One of my priest friends used to say to me: "Fr. Shijo, you should eat pork chicharrón and see how delicious it is!" But since I do not eat meat, I have never tasted it; so I cannot tell anyone whether it is delicious or not. In the same way, if we have not experienced Jesus personally, deep in the inner core of our hearts, we cannot truly share His love with others. This is the reason the Psalmist invites us to "Taste and see that the Lord is good ..." (Ps. 34:8). Our Christian vocation is first to taste, to experience, and to encounter the goodness of the Lord. Only then are we to share that experience with others.

We see this clearly in the life of Mother Teresa. The world was amazed at her works and those of her companions. However, people also often spoke about her smile; a smile that brought comfort to the suffering, and hope to the hopeless. She was even called the "Smile of Calcutta." That smile was a light for sorrowful eyes, and a gentle yet powerful force for peace. This did not come from her own strength. It flowed from her deep and intimate relationship with Jesus whom she encountered daily in prayer and the Eucharist.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us strive to know Jesus more deeply by living in His presence; keeping Him in our hearts; and shaping our lives according to His teachings. When we do this, our smiles will comfort others, our words will heal wounded hearts, and our lives will become a living testimony of God's love. Through us, others will be drawn closer to Jesus.

So, let us become true witnesses of Christ by first knowing Him, loving Him, and experiencing Him in our daily lives.