

CATECHESIS #15

June 16, 2019

Is the Second Reading always from the New Testament?

The New Testament of the Bible has 4 sections – the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters or Epistles and the Book of Revelation. The Gospels are proclaimed by the priest or deacon and most of the Acts of the Apostles is read only in the Easter season. The Second Reading is usually taken from one of the Letters or the Book of Revelation and is not necessarily connected with the gospel reading.

The time in which the New Testament was written has many similarities with our modern society. The apostles evangelized in a world that didn't know Jesus. It was a society clinging to pagan practices and lacking in morals. Today, even though the name of Jesus is widely recognized, Jesus, our God and Savior, remains unknown to most people floundering in a world with no moral compass.

Life in the Roman Empire during the age of the apostles tended to be egocentric, self-gratifying, unfulfilling and Godless. The people who were open to the gospel message were disillusioned with the life that surrounded them. They recognized true freedom and fulfillment in the words of the apostles. Christianity was the answer to the unrecognized longing of their heart.

Today, the Church is experiencing a new wave of converts. Like the early Christians, these people are looking for more meaning to life. In embracing Christ's teachings, they face the same apparently insurmountable challenges now as then – rejection from family and friends, social stigma, economic persecution, fear of living a life radically like Christ's. Neither Christ nor any scripture writers ever promised that Christianity would be easy. Christianity is not for the weak of heart.

In the Second Reading, we find many instructions and much encouragement on how we should live our Christian life in today's world. We can find teachings on marriage, raising children, solving disputes, duties to employers and government among other things. There are teachings on sinful lifestyles, clearly indicating situations we should renounce or avoid. The New Testament is a rich resource for us to learn how to live as true Christians. Let us listen carefully to the Second Reading.