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Today's Word

Easter Sunday, Year A (17 May)

Parish Priest: Father Hiroshi Konishi

First Reading: Acts 1:1 - 11

Second Reading: Letter to the Ephesians 1:17 - 23

Gospel Reading: Gospel of Matthew 28:16 - 20

Jesus approached...

In the "Gospel of Matthew", people often "approach" Jesus with reverence, but in today's Gospel reading, it is Jesus Himself who "approaches" His disciples. "Jesus approached His disciples and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'" (Chapter 28, verse 18, Franciscan Translation).

In fact, there is another scene where Jesus draws near. It is the account of the Transfiguration. Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up; do not be afraid'" (Chapter 17, verse 7). In both instances, Jesus takes the initiative to approach the disciples when they are afraid. And, Jesus strengthens and encourages the disciples, commanding them, "Until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead, do not tell anyone what you have seen" (Chapter 17, verse 9). On the other hand, in today's Gospel reading, Jesus, having drawn near, commands and promises, "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them. "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Chapter 28, verses 19 - 20), he commands and promises.

Jesus approaches the disciples who are afraid after seeing him transfigured on the high mountain. And, toward the disciples who are filled with fear and doubt upon witnessing the risen Jesus, Jesus draws near to them. We cannot help but see Jesus' tenderness in such moments. And is it a mere coincidence that the mission to preach has been given? That is to say, after the scene of the Transfiguration, the disciples preach the Kingdom of God together with Jesus, and in today's passage,

after coming down from the mountain, the disciples begin to preach, “observing all that I have commanded you” (verse 20).

Please pay attention to verses 19 and 20. “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them”

Let us keep these four verbs in mind. The only one written in the imperative mood is “make disciples.” The others are in the participle form. Therefore, “going” is for the purpose of “making disciples,” and “baptizing” and “teaching” can be considered the concrete aspects of “making disciples.”

In the Gospel of Matthew, “making disciples” characterizes Jesus’ entire ministry. Jesus’ work of making disciples, which began in Galilee(4:18), is passed on to the disciples after Jesus’ resurrection. And all peoples become disciples.

The phrase “baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” in verse 19 literally translates to “to immerse or submerge in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The “name” here is not merely a label, but represents the very essence of God. It signifies being invited into the life of God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It means being deeply united with that life. At Jesus’ own baptism, the Holy Spirit descended, and a voice from heaven declared him to be the beloved Son (Chapter 3, verses 16 -17).

The phrase “I will be with you always” in verse 20 brings to mind verse 23 of Chapter 1: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel. This name means ‘God is with us.’ ” The God who “is with us” becomes the central theme of the Gospel of Matthew.

Event Announcement

31 May (Trinity Sunday) Feast of Mary (Mass begins at 10.30 am)
Fukushima Vegetable Sale, Don Bosco Society Sale
7 June (Corpus Christi) First Holy Communion (Mass begins at 9.30 am)