

Reading for Saturday after Epiphany

11th January 2025

First reading

1 John 5:14-21

‘He hears us in whatever we ask.’

Beloved: This is the confidence that we have towards him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life — to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 149:1-2. 3-4. 5-6a, 9b. R4a

The Lord takes delight in his people.

Sing a new song to the Lord,
his praise in the assembly of the faithful.
Let Israel rejoice in its Maker;
let Zion’s children exult in their king.
Let them praise his name with dancing,
and make music with timbrel and lyre.
For the Lord takes delight in his people;
he adorns the poor with salvation.
Let the faithful exult in glory,
and rejoice as they take their rest.
Let the praise of God be in their mouths
This is an honour for all his faithful.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 4:16

Alleluia, alleluia.

The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 3:22-30

‘The friend of the bridegroom rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice.’

At that time: Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptising. John also was baptising at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptised for John had not yet been put in prison.

Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness — look,

he is baptising, and all are going to him.’ John answered, ‘A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, “I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.” The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

In the Gospel passage today, taken from the Gospel according to St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, we hear of the works of the Lord Jesus and His Herald, John the Baptist, who were both working on the people, baptising them and calling them to repent from their sins and return to the Lord. And we hear of how the Lord Jesus at that time was becoming more and more popular, while fewer and fewer people were coming to John the Baptist. Prior to this, thousands upon thousands of people came flocking to John the Baptist, wanting to listen to him and to be baptised by him, and some even thought of him as the Messiah. But he told them all clearly that he was not the Messiah and was merely just the one sent ahead of the Lord to prepare the way for him.

Hence, when some of the disciples of John the Baptist told him of the issue, John the Baptist humbly said that it was how things were meant to be, that he should decrease and decline in importance and popularity while the Lord became more and more renowned and popular among the people. He had done what he was tasked to do, preparing the path for the Lord’s coming. It was indeed easy for one like John the Baptist to seek popularity and support from the people, as some other false Messiahs at that time had tried to do, gaining the support of many people and rising up in rebellion against the Romans, claiming to be the Messiah, only to have their rebellions failed and themselves killed and destroyed, because they did not represent the truth of God.

But John the Baptist remained obedient and committed to the mission which he has been entrusted with, resisting the temptations of worldly glory and ambitions, and did what he was tasked to do, to proclaim the Saviour of the world to everyone. And as he did so, he reminded all of us as Christians that we are also tasked and entrusted with the responsibility to proclaim the salvation of God and His truth, His love and hope to everyone whom we encounter daily in our lives. Each and every one of us have been given the opportunities and the grace to reach out to others whom we meet and encounter, interact and work with in our respective lives so that we may show to them the love of God, His truth and Good News through our own exemplary lives and actions.