

October 18, 2020

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 45:1, 4-6

1 Thes 1:1-5B

Mt 22:15-21

GROW: I took up distance running some years ago, thanks largely to a group of friends who encouraged me along the way. We'd share the peaks and valleys of our lives as we tackled rolling hills. Those long runs come to mind when I hear Paul give thanks to the Thessalonians for having "endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul here speaks of hope in Jesus – a hope that has the risen Christ as its foundation, and is central to the Christian life. When I think of what lies at the end of a long run, such as water and blissful rest, and how grateful I am for these simple pleasures, I cannot help but rejoice in the hope that St. Paul refers to today. Our catechism makes it clear: "We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives forever, so after death the righteous will live forever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day." (989)

GO: During a particularly challenging time, I confided in a close friend over the phone. She didn't just offer to pray for me, she actually prayed *with* me on that phone call. I don't recall her exact words, but she called on Jesus to help me trust that God would see me through. So often, it can be hard to find the words to encourage others in their faith. When that happens, why not bring Jesus into the conversation? It may seem awkward at first, but offering to pray with another person in real time can be a powerful witness and encouragement. As Christians, we don't rely on "hoping" that everything will work out in the end; instead, we know that our hope is in Christ Jesus. As the catechism says: "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness." (1817) It doesn't get much more direct than that. Reflect on what "hope" looks like for us as Christians. And then tell a friend about it.

DID YOU KNOW? The source of our second reading today, the First Letter from Paul to the Thessalonians, contains the earliest mention within Christian literature of the three theological virtues: "faith, hope and love." Reread today's passage, and then read 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8. In prayer, we can ask God to help us grow in all three virtues and show us ways to share them with others.