

Year C 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Zec 12:10-11; 13:1; Ps 63; Gal 3:26-29; Lk 9:18-24

This Sunday we can reflect on the topic of our baptism as a conversion process in which we, by renewing our promise to follow Christ, become more and more like him each day.

The last part of Zechariah, one of the last prophets in the Bible, is full of mysterious prophecies. Our first reading speaks of the pouring out of a spirit of grace and supplication, even as the people look on the One whom they have pierced and mourn as for an only Son. “On that day” there shall be an open fountain “to purify from sin and uncleanness.” This passage has rightly been seen as a prophecy of the piercing of Jesus’ side at the cross, when blood and water came out, Jn 19:31-37. This Blood and Water is that of the baptism with “Holy Spirit and fire” which really cleans and allows us to be close to God: Lk 3:16; 12:49-50; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Jn 1:5-7; 5:6; Rev 1:5; 7:14.

The psalm today reflects that supplication for God’s life, expressed as thirst for living water when one is parched and lifeless. The psalmist expects to be fully satisfied, as in a banquet with rich foods; he or she will find a place under God’s wings (see Dt 32:11; Ps 91:1-4; Lk 13:34). For us Christians, this “place” is “in Christ,” as the second reading shows. In baptism, we are “baptized” into Christ, and join him in his death and resurrection, and become members of his Body: Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 12:12-27. “Place” in the Bible is often another name for God’s Temple, or for heaven, where God dwells, 1 Kgs 8:27-29, 39, 43. Christ came to prepare a Place for us, himself, in the temple of his Body, Jn 2:19-22; 14:1-4. We also must prepare a place for God, by loving Jesus and keeping his Word, Jn 14:23. And we know the way to this Place: it is Jesus, Jn 14:4-6.

The gospel reading reminds us of Jesus’ way which we must follow. We must do as Jesus did. His dying was the death of sin. What is typical of sin? Division, war among the members of Christ’s Body (see Jas 4). The reading from Galatians proclaims that in the Body of Christ there should be no division, we must be one, as Jesus already had prayed in his final discourse, Jn 17:20-21. This is the only way to evangelize, to show that in love, in Christ, we are one. Something which seems quite scarce these days.