

Father Ho Lung's Sermon 9th February 2013 (Parish Visit to MOP)

Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21

Ps 23:1-6

Mark 6:30-34

In today's Gospel, the people had a yearning for the Lord "like sheep without a shepherd". It is something that is deep within us. Christ is not just some god, better than the others; He is the True God, who sits on our hearts and consciences. We are children of God, very much like Jesus. Jesus is the only begotten child of God, deliberately, so we may understand there is only one person we need to identify with. The Holy Spirit moves within us so we are inspired to be like the Son of God.

People always ask, "What do you want to do with your life?" But the only answer to this is to be a true child of God. We are called to be Christ, not just to follow Him. We have different talents and temperaments, so we have to find our own purpose. Why are we on earth? To be Christ.

The Church has lost its conviction. There is so much stress on pro-choice in all areas of life. When people meet you they should see and hear one reality: "This person is truly a child of God," not just by birth but by aspiration. Love your God with your whole heart, your whole mind, and your whole soul.

Your talent is not your identity, you are who you are. Every man or woman has a purpose in life. Ask yourself, "What have I done with my life so far? (In terms of the Kingdom of God.) Then ask, "Where do I go from here?"

People don't know where they are going. That remains constant is that there is a yearning.

Look at your lives. See where you've veered off in the past. Ask "How can I be faithful to the Lord in future?"

In the Church, there is no such thing as temporary vocations. The Cross of Jesus is a cross-roads for people. We have to take up our cross daily. There are always

struggles. To have no suffering is the way of the world. We're here to know each other and to shape each other.

To waste time watching TV is not the way of God. We are called to simplicity and depth. This is the beginning of the journey to Calvary.

The greatest difficulty is to get our hearts and minds to stay steady on the path. But if your heart is locked into the heart of God, the other things (of the world) pass us by. We're on a pilgrimage. Do not deviate from Christ.

In today's scriptures, we must make sure that we are generous, but first of all generous to the Lord. The trap that the Church has fallen into is that following Christ is computerized (compartmentalized?) as Sunday church-going. But we need to be directed to God, and seek His will night and day.

The will of God is laid on every single person. You have a purpose, you must fulfill it.

Why did Christ and Mary both say "Thy will be done?" Because they had a clear understanding that they had a purpose. They loved God generously.

What do you do with your time? Get to know the Word of God. Know that at Mass you are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. Say to your children, "What does the Word of God tell you about how you should live?"

Be generous to God with your time and talents. Charity begins with the needy. To say that charity begins at home is to find excuses. Everyone wants the best for their children, but they stop there. To insist that your child is the best in the class, and has the best of everything is pride. You should want for your children to be holy and to pour themselves out to the Lord.

The only proper understanding of the Gospel is to hear it with the heart and be moved to action.

Secular love is all about "Me and mine first." But Christian love is otherness. In the Beatitudes, Jesus said "Blessed are the hungry," and He says that we should love our enemies.

In his tragic cry to the Father, "Why have you forsaken me?" we see that the Son has a job to do. The Father didn't come down and rescue Him. We too have to drink the cup to the end.

The deepest pleasure is to know that we have been like Christ. Jesus is the only model for men, and Mary is the only model for women.

The more you pour yourselves out, the richer you become, with riches that come from faith.

In John, Ch 15, Jesus said "You are my friends, I no longer call you servants. I have made known to you all things, and I want you to build the Kingdom.

Poverty is the best way to live. It is of tremendous value, in a way that the world cannot understand. The Brothers have to leave their mothers and fathers behind to live this life.

The richness of faith in God, lies in paradox. We have to go where others don't want to go, on the narrow way. It is a whole re-evaluation of life.

You are strange people who choose to spend time with the poor. MOP is considered foolish even within the Church.

In Corinthians, Ch 6, vs 16, St Paul quotes Leviticus Ch 26, vs 11, 12, when it says you are the Temple of the Living God. "I will dwell in them and walk with them, and I will be their God" and "I will set my tabernacle among you."

You will never be happy until you become a holy man or woman. Then you will know the Lord, and know yourself.

We need to give our time and attention to the Lord, as in Psalm 16, vs 8: "I set the Lord always in my sight." Family life is busy, but it is a good witness to say to our families, "I'm busy now, this is time for the Lord."

Notes from Question and Answer Session

- Parts of the Church are caught up in Mammon. I got my vocation from the Word of God. The Word of God became a command for me.
- The future of the Church is the Missionary Church.
- The Kingdom of God is here when there is justice and mercy to the forgotten people.
- The Jewish people in Jesus' day tried to make religion local. But Jesus sends us out into the whole world.
- If we have a Missionary Church for the poor, we will be enriched, and the Church will be enriched.
- We're entrapped in a selfish life, but we have to break loose. The more you cast off the shackles of materialism, the richer you become spiritually.
- Young people want to see action, not just hear words.
- Become instruments of renewal.
- Know your purpose in life. You can come to know it from the passage Jesus read out in the synagogue, "I have come to bring good news to the poor," and from the Beatitudes.
- To let children do what they want, creates a false peace. But Jesus said He came to bring a sword. You have to be firm and turn off the TV, and give them alternatives.
- Serving God is the only true peace. The more we give the more selfless we become.