

## THE HOMILY FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

### *Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ*

Ever since the **WHO** declared Covid-19 a global pandemic, almost 200 million cases have been reported thus far, and the death rate has surpassed the 4 million mark. Many people have lost loved-ones, many have been touched by the pandemic in one way or another, and we wonder how and when it will end. *Only God knows....*

We must therefore be resolute in our prayers because the Bible tells us that these things must come to pass (ref Matt 24 and Luke 21....)

“Our” earthly world and our country are in state of disarray, normality as we knew it, has changed. Even though we are surrounded by these abnormalities, as Christians, we have a very different view of death, as Paul says in his letter to the Romans “<sup>10</sup>*The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*”

Do not become disheartened or despondent because the situation looks dire. We were baptised into Christ Jesus, and our “Old self” was crucified with him, that we should no longer be in bondage to sin. When you accepted Christ as your Saviour, you became “Born again” you were Baptised into the “Body of Christ” and 1Cor. 12 (<sup>12-13</sup>) “*The body is a unit, though it is composed of many parts. And although its parts are many, they all form one body. So it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink.*”

Jesus said, “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:<sup>28</sup>). He came to give His life, and His death results in salvation for those who believe. Jesus died for each one of us, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:<sup>23</sup>). There are no exceptions. Jesus came to save us from the guilt and power of our sins. He came to reconcile us to God. “*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*” (John 3:<sup>17</sup>).

He is the Lamb of God who was crucified on the cross as the propitiation for our sins. Vs 10 says that Jesus shed His blood “once” (once for all) never to be repeated. Our Saviour’s last words at the cross were: “*It is finished*” because He had accomplished what the Father had sent Him to do.

Jesus often rebuked the Pharisees, calling them hypocrites and a bunch of vipers, and in our Gospel reading today in Matthew 5, He said: “<sup>20</sup>*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* This “benchmark” might sound easy to achieve as we don’t stand on street corners to pray for other to see, but in fact Jesus has set a benchmark that is tremendously hard to meet, almost impossible. The Pharisees were devoted to keeping the rules and Jesus says, so unless you are better than the best at keeping the Law, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. One has to ask, “Is Jesus telling us to try harder?”

Jesus refers to the fifth commandment, *whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of judgement*, and he draws a parallel by saying; *whosoever is angry with his brother is also in danger of judgement*. Jesus also says, “*leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*” So you can’t bring something to God if you are withholding something from your brother. If you are carrying anger or hatred toward your brother, you cannot serve God or give Him a gift, you first need to put things right with your brother (neighbour) before you try to come to God. 1John 4 says, <sup>20</sup> *Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God, must also love their brother and sister.* So we cannot pretend to be Christians we need to be sincere in our actions, least we fall short of the Kingdom of heaven.

The closing verses of the Gospel tell us, *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee unto the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into the prison.*

This also applies to us whilst we are still sojourners on this earth. Romans 13 *instructs us to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.* <sup>2</sup> *Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.* We have seen such an example unfolding in our country this past week. Nobody is above the law.

That is what is meant, *"Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way"*. God is our opponent at law. He is the one who will deliver you to the "officer" who will throw you into prison, from which there is no escape until you have paid the last farthing. That prison is hell, and the last farthing is eternity. James 4:<sup>14</sup> tells us *"You do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."*

My brothers and sisters in conclusion of today's message, I urge you to make sure that you are in harmony with your adversary, that you may walk in newness of life, and in the light of Christ.

+ *In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost.*

