

Let us pray

Almighty and everlasting God, we glorify your name and we give you thanks. We call upon you this morning as we remember all our veterans past and present, especially those who have paid the ultimate price with their lives to bring peace to the whole world. We ask you for your healing on those who have been wounded in body and soul. We ask you to bless their families and give them your peace in Jesus Christ Name we pray. Amen.

Good morning,

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our veterans, men and women, for their service to our great nation as this Wednesday is Veterans Day. I also want to say thank you to their family members for all the sacrifices they have made.

Many lives were lost as we reflect and remember our men and women who have fought in several wars and because of their courageous actions, they have brought peace to the world we live in and the freedom we are all enjoying.

Our church is also named after a Veteran soldier, who became a Saint because of his actions and deeds towards others. St Martin made sacrifices and commitments for the betterment of others.

St. Martin lived in the fourth century A.D. and he was born in what today's present day Hungary. He served as a soldier in the Roman army and had a conversion experience at the age of 18, which led him to become a monk and eventually the bishop of Tours in what today's modern day France.

We all probably have heard about St. Martin's story. He was at the gates of the city of Amieus with his soldiers when he met a scantily dressed beggar.

St. Martin cut his own military cloak in half and shared it with the beggar.

In our gospel reading for today, Jesus told the parable of the sheep and goats.

"All nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them from one another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he will set up the sheep from the goats. And He will set up the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on the right hand "come you blessed of my

father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For, I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was naked and you clothed Me. I was sick and you visited Me.

In today's gospel, some of us might have vision of the judgement day, of when we all stand in front of our Lord. But, our God is a good and Loving God. He does not have any unrealistic expectation of us.

Jesus parable of the sheep and goats is not expecting us to singlehandedly meet the needs of the world poor or solve the entire social injustice problem around us.

What this parable is asking of us is to recognize Christ in every human being. To love one another as Christ loves us. All our Lord demand of us is our heart and to try our best to emulate Christ like behavior.

Our gospel for today makes me reflect about a song in my early school years.

Some of you may know that I grew up in Nigeria. When I was in the primary school, which is called the elementary school here in the United States, before the school starts all students will line up according to our classes for morning prayers and instructions from our

headmaster which is equivalent to the principal. I remembered that we sing this song “Day by Day, dear Lord, of you three things I pray; to see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly day by day. Amen.

Let us take a step back and think about the time when Jesus told this parable:

Why did Jesus tell this parable and why the comparison of a sheep and goats?

How were the poor people treated at that time?

What was the living condition of folks at that time?

What kind of health care system do they have?

What was their legal system looks like?

Do women have rights at that time?

What kinds of opportunities were available for common people at that time?

What are the needs of folks at that time?

Now, let us compare the events at that time and our current living environment.

What I found intriguing about the bible is that every time that I pick a certain passage to read, it might means something to me today and the same passage might means something else tomorrow. But it reflects what is going on in the world around me all the time.

Jesus definitely was alerting us of the importance of helping each other, loving our neighbors as ourselves, and taking care of the poor, sick, weak and oppressed in our society.

Recently, I listened to a song from Rhonda Vincent, Country Singer and she got my attention. The title of the music is You don't love God if you don't your neighbor. The lyrics go like this:

There are many people who will say they are Christians and they live like Christians on the Sabbath day, but come Monday morning till coming Sunday they will fight with their neighbor all day long.

Oh you don't love God, if you don't love your neighbor. If you gossip about him, if you never help him if he gets in trouble and you do not try to help him then you don't love your neighbor and you don't love God. Wow

What is Rhonda Vincent telling us?

Again our God is not placing unrealistic expectation on us. As long as we have it in our heart to be kind, compassionate and provide assistance to others that will be Christ like behavior.

Jesus's parable of the sheep and the goats is a direct warning to all of us, but the beauty of this parable is that Jesus gave us a choice. We have a choice to change our behavior and what we do with our choice matters.

This parable basically is challenging all of us to lend a helping hand to our fellow man that is in need of assistance. As I related earlier, our church is named after a Saint (St Martin) a soldier who cut his own military cloak in half and shared it with the beggar who is in need.

This year has been very challenging for a lot of us. We are going through a pandemic period in which a lot of people have lost their loved ones. Thousands of people have lost their jobs and some families that have never ask for assistance found themselves in an unexpected situations.

Some of us are struggling, because of the effects of this pandemic period and there is feeling of uncertainty all around us. There is social injustice and couple with the political election time that has caused division within our community and with our fellow countrymen due to the political climate.

I encourage us to take a step back and ask ourselves what we see. The fact is that we have to take a critical look at ourselves and see our own brokenness and acknowledged it. Then we can be able to see others that they are just like us and see their struggles and brokenness, in that we can recognize it.

Cold season is around the corner, do you have a plan to help those in need around your community?

Couple of Holiday seasons is around the corner as well, what are your plans for those families in need to have a good holiday time, especially during this pandemic period when thousands of families have lost their jobs.

Our action is necessary in fulfilling our Christian responsibilities. This is what God's love is all about.

It is all about what is in our heart, to love our neighbors as ourselves. We cannot be perfect, because only our Lord is perfect. It is about treating each other with respect, loving others, to be compassionate to the needs of the sick, oppressed, and stand up for social justice within our community. We can add our voices to those crying out for justice.

On the judgement day, it is all about what is in our heart that we will be judged and God sees our heart and knows us better than we know ourselves. We will be judged by a Loving and Welcoming God who wants all of us in His Kingdom.

Day by day, dear Lord of you three things I pray: to see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen