

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



## **Catholic Community**

**Member of the English-Speaking Mission**

**Mass: Fridays at 6 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel**

**Sundays at 10 a.m. in the main Sanctuary**

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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10-12

**July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Celebrant: Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke**

**Readings (Missal p 181 et seqq.): Isa 55:10-11 • Ps 65:10-14 • Rom 8:18-23 • Mt 23**

### **A focus on wealth and money kills the spirit of God and the freedom we are promised**

The three scripture passages today seem to have a strong “counter-cultural” message. They challenge us to look at our world and its values in a critical way. They invite us to move beyond greed and selfishness. They invite us to learn from others and they invite us to connect with others.

I am sure this is a good topic for this Sunday: yesterday and the day before yesterday, the G20 summit took place in Hamburg where world leaders discussed about the future of our world. Some thoughts that might arise when we see the news about the G20 summit and when we parallelly read the biblical readings.

Our culture seems to value power and control. However, the scripture passages today give us a different image of a savior: the savior they present comes with humility, “*meek and riding on an ass*”. Our societies are often overwhelmed with greed and large scale corporate abuse. In this context of our 21<sup>st</sup> century societies, the scriptures remind us of a different way of living, they remind us of virtues that are essential for a “simplicity of life” and for a “gentleness of spirit”.

Wealth, control, and domination are not the central values of Jesus Christ. They cannot be the central values of the friends of Jesus Christ, they cannot be our central values.

In a world that is choking on greenhouse gases, that is killing the life of the oceans, and that is over-consuming all kinds of resources, we are invited to respect our planet, we are invited to cherish the gifts we have been given - by living simply and responsibly.

In a world filled with the weapons of war and spending on the ways of violence, the scriptures speak of a savior who banishes the horse, the chariot and the warrior's bow – all means for war and violence. The scriptures certainly challenge our world and our world leaders which invest so many resources into fighting wars and procuring weapons for war.

We live in a world where the international trade system and the world economy seem to disadvantage those who have little. In this world, we are reminded that

*“if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if you live by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live”*

– or in a different translation:

*“We must not live to satisfy our desires. If we do, we will die. But we will live, if by the help of God's Spirit we say “No” to our desires.”*

This is what Paul writes. “*We will live, if by the help of God's Spirit we say “No” to our desires.*” A focus on wealth and money and control and domination will certainly “kill” the spirit of God, will certainly kill the freedom God wants to offer us, kills the “life in abundance” we are promised. The gospel reminds us that its counter-cultural message is a message of liberation. As we let go of all the craziness of our culture, we will find “rest” and finally really be alive. Then, when we are really alive, then justice and peace can truly take over, or in biblical terms: by our actions “the kingdom of God” comes nearer.

**Fr. Wolfgang Felber, SJ**

**Welcome to All Saints! Many of us are gone for the summer and return in August but would like to welcome you to our community.**

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