

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 23rd, 2017 – Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant: Fr. Vincent Karatunga

Readings (Missal p 183 et seqq.): Wis 12:13, 16-19 • Ps 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16 • Rom 8:26-27 • Mt 13:24-43

HOPING AGAINST ALL HOPE

In 1982 a small group of young people began to come together in the Nikolai-Church in the city of Leipzig to pray for peace and reflect and discuss about peace. Slowly, these regular peace prayers every Monday attracted others, even non-Christians. Over the years the meetings became more political. Prayers were followed by peaceful demonstrations. It became a movement and spread to other cities of Eastern Germany. Eventually what started as a small prayer group became a mass movement that brought down the Berlin wall in 1989. Those who started them had no idea what effects their action would have. But they continued it against growing resistance by the authorities. Eventually their prayers and dreams became a reality. These Monday Peace Prayers still go on today.

What has this to do with the readings of today? In the story of the sower Jesus tells us his own life story. He is the sower who spreads the good seed of the word, his message that the kingdom of God is at hand. Some listen and forget it straightaway. Others seem interested for a while, but are too busy with other things. The few who remain get scared when the authorities turn against Jesus. Eventually, he asked even his closest friends: "Do you also want to go"? His mission seems a complete disaster.

But then Jesus adds something surprising to his story. Although all seems lost he makes a tremendous act of faith: God will bring in his harvest 30, 60, 100-fold. He knows that God's word cannot fail, as Isaiah said in the first reading, even when humanly speaking there is not a trace of hope left. Jesus will make this act of trust again at the end of his life. Hanging on the cross when all is definitely lost, Jesus entrusts life and his mission to His Father. We know that his hope was not disappointed.

Paul lives in a similar spirit of unshakable hope in God's promise. He meets a thousand obstacles in his mission. He is persecuted and put in prison, beaten up and almost stoned to death. He struggles with divisions in the Christian communities and is abandoned by his friends when it comes to his court trial. Yet, he stubbornly goes on preaching to everybody convinced that Jesus' message will eventually bear fruit. Paul sees, in all the situations of chaos and confusion he lives through, the "birth pangs" of a God's new creation.

It is a hallmark of all truly great people that have brought about positive change, people like Mandela, Martin Luther King or this extraordinary young Pakistani girl Malala who was almost shot by the Taliban and goes on pushing the education of Muslim girls all over the world. They were convinced that they had a mission and they went on with it against all odds.

Sometimes, we could get discouraged when we look around at the chaos, the violence and conflicts in today's world, and where our leaders are at a loss as to how to get out of the mess. At times, we may face situations in our personal lives where we are completely lost and see no way out. The good news of today wants to assure us that God will succeed in the end, with our world, with the church and also with me. It may not be as I now wish or imagine. It will be a 100-times better than anything I can think of.

We have good reason to stick to our hope when all human hope is gone. The day our doctor says, "There is nothing more I can do for you", will be the very moment when our birth pangs will come to an end and we will at last be set free.

Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke, MAfr

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

Friends of All Saints e.V. IBAN: DE15 3706 0193 6001 6690 18 BIC: GENODED1PAX