

ALL SAINTS

We just heard a man asking God for protection and justice. In some moment of the Psalm reading, we can even detect a tone of demand and anger in his voice. For sure there is a lot of desperation. It is a cry for justice and vindication, a cry full of hope. It is a praying, but a different type praying. Not similar to what we have been taught: we always give God thanks and after that we ask for what we want or what we think we need. In this prayer, it is more like: I have done all that you had asked me, now give me this protection and justice.

The voice we heard sounds like the one we have when we lost someone we love, the desperation in the demands to God: WHY? When we are in the pain of the loss, the hopelessness of abandonment, there is still room for hope in our hearts. The pain, sometimes, overshadows our hope in the baptismal promises, faith is still there, and the healing that comes in a timely manner. Then we embrace the life, memories of our saints, when we

remember the resurrection that entails an eternal life qualitatively better than what they had in their lives we knew.

When Jesus was in his last minutes of earthly life, he cried and ask God “why have you forsaken me?” A lament, an expression of His humanity. Like the duality in Jesus’ life, the duality of the human and divine in Jesus being, there is a duality in grieving too: the pain, questioning and demanding to God and the hope in the promise of eternal life.

Today, Around the Christian world, we are going to remember and honor those who are in the glory of God. The duality is present again, in the pain of memories, suffering, loneliness that their passing away left us; but also, the joy and happiness of their holiness. Maybe a time to question God again: Why? and at the same time to give Him thanks for our beloved one’s presence in our lives. Because that presence, and absence, has built what we are now and what church is now here and there.

These celebrations go from meaningful ceremonies, to food festivals like those in Mexico where the families have an altar with the pictures of their saints in an offering of their favorite food, for each one! Zempasuchil flower that make a road from the altar to the home door, so their loved will find the way to come back.

In El Salvador, it is a day for families to get together and go to the cemeteries to flower their places of eternal rest”, some get music, and we eat a special dessert called hojuelas that is like deep fried dough with a sweet sauce. That day all the cemeteries are colorful and scented and full of joy. A mix of timed life and eternity.

Like this man demanding God for protection, Jesus in Luke’s gospel, was demanded for an answer in a tricky question that was intended to deny the resurrection. A couple years ago, in El Salvador, Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero was questioned about his faith and Ministry by religious leaders. For these people, like the Sadducees, resurrection was not real. When he was in his

faith journey, he went to see the pope begging for help to stop the repression in our country, he was ignored, So, when Monsignor Oscar Romero learned that he was going to be assassinated he said "I will resurrect in my peoples' fights". As a catholic Archbishop he was assigned to have bodyguards but he totally refused. He was a faithful man that completely believed in the promise of Resurrection. He was cowardly assassinated, by the right extreme, the conservatives, nationalists, and Christians, while officiating mass in a palliative care hospital. And he did resurrect, he was present in the Salvadorean peoples' demand of justice, in the clamor to a God of life, He was present at the end of the war, and during the transition period that came after. He was a martyr and is the first Salvadorean saint under catholic canons. As many other people who were denouncing the injustices, he was persecuted. Then, when Catholic Church elevated him to the status of Saint, those men and women of faith, justice seekers, were also elevated and dignified.

He is still with us in the hopes of a just world. He represents the walking of a totally oriented church to social justice and the unbreakable faith in a God of life. He gave his human life to become saint and eternal. He also represents the resurrection that has been promised to all of us.

All saint's day is a day of celebration of life and celebration of God's promise of eternal life in Jesus that we get during our baptism. A dual celebration that opens painful wounds of grief and healing, forgiveness, love, and hope that comes from our Lord.