

“My Grace is Sufficient for You”

The Word and Sacrament we share each time we gather as a Christian community gives us opportunities to reflect on our lives and our struggles as St. Paul reflects in the 2nd reading today. Paul describes his external and internal struggles. He describes how he has begged God to remove his weaknesses but God answered him that his grace is sufficient for him to carry on his struggles. Paul believed so much that it was the grace of God that turned him from being a persecutor to a preacher. Thus, he said, “What I am, I am through the grace of God and the grace God has given me has not been fruitless.” (1 Corinthians. 15: 10).

God’s grace is enough for us in every vocation we find ourselves. Grace is a gratuitous gift of God for our sanctification and salvation. The abundance of God’s grace to us is made manifest through the person of Jesus Christ- the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the internal strength he gives us to live a holy life. Recognition of God’s grace is recognition of his presence in our lives. We do not ask for his grace because his grace is with us but we ask that we acknowledge and recognize this grace in our lives.

The question we ask ourselves is: *How do we respond to God’s grace in our lives?* The first reading and the gospel describe how people at different times and circumstances responded or appreciated the grace of God. In the first reading, God through the prophet Ezekiel describes the rebellious attitudes of Israelites and how they revolted against him. It is a total rejection of God’s grace. Similarly, in the gospel, Jesus was rejected and looked at with contempt by his people. The first reading is rejection through obstinacy and hardheartedness, and the gospel is rejection through contempt and negligence. Rejection, contempt, and negligence are signs of lack of faith.

We can behave like these people in the readings by the way we handle things concerning our spiritual life, especially by closing up our hearts against the grace opportunities we have. The scriptural story of the two thieves crucified with Christ on the cross reminds us of two different attitudes towards grace opportunities. That is when we fail to ask ourselves questions about our life and try always to defend our weaknesses or even totally block people from telling us something about our lives. We can also take things for granted or show nonchalant attitudes towards the grace opportunities we have and use the common language like, “it doesn’t matter”. We pray that God will open our hearts to recognize the abundance of grace he has given us and make it effective in our lives. Amen.