4 B

MDP of God

All of our readings today from God’s holy Word are telling us of God’s love and concern for us as we navigate our way through this life

In our 1st reading Moses is instructing the people of Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land

God had delivered them from slavery---and yet time and time again the people had failed to recognize that God was with them and loved them---*that’s why they wandered in the desert for 40 years*

God had planned to bring them into the Promised Land much sooner—*but the people were afraid*—**they didn’t trust that God would bring them victory-**--so that generation died out before the next generation was willing to trust God

*Going into the Promised Land wasn’t going to be a walk in the park—***they had to conquer the land**—*which of course was going to be no easy task---*and 40 years earlier the generation who had seen God’s wonders in Egypt—the generation who saw the plagues that came down on the Egyptians—and who had passed through the Red Sea as Pharaoh’s army chased them—*that generation didn’t trust that God would be with them*

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Now a new generation has been raised up—and they’re about to enter into the Promised Land

As Moses is telling them that God will be with them

*But God is going to speak to them through human instruments*

God isn’t going to appear to them in all His glory—God’s not going to speak to them with a booming voice from the heavens---**NO—***God is going to send prophets that they will have to listen too*

Because when God spoke to them in the desert in powerful glorious ways---*the people were afraid*—and they said to Moses---don’t let us see that again

Moses quotes them saying, “‘Let us not again hear the voice of the LORD, our God, nor see this great fire any more, lest we die.’

So Moses is saying to them---God will be with you—God won’t abandon you---**trust Him**—and be grateful to Him for all He’s done for you

But know that He’s going to speak to you through the prophets rather than speak to you directly

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In our psalm today –the psalmist is also assuring us of God’s love for us—and His concern for our wellbeing---and the psalmist is telling us how we should react to that love and concern

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
    let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
    let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
    let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
    and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
    “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
    as in the day of Massah in the desert,
Where your fathers tempted me;
    they tested me though they had seen my works.”

And of course we prayed together throughout the psalm, “**If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”**

**So the psalm is telling us how God—is always with us—He’s always concerned for us—He’s always guiding us---but it’s warning that there are times when we harden our hearts against Him—just the Israelites did at Meribah and Massah in the desert**

 Times when we don’t want to listen to Him

And we’re going to see that in the Gospel—in today’s gospel the people are amazed at Jesus because He spoke with authority---but as Mark’s gospel goes on we’re going to see that the authorities—the scribes and the Pharisees in particular–they didn’t want to hear what He had to say

 Okay---so how can we hear the authoritative voice of Jeus today?

How can we know what God wants us to know?---How can we know the truth that will set us free?

Well---Jesus gave us His Church that could speak authoritatively to us on faith and morals

Even though the people who make up the Church are sinners---after all---you and I are part of the Church---and you and I are sinners

He speaks through His Church—even though some of the leaders of the Church---sometimes do or say stupid things

 Think of Peter who denied that he even knew Jesus

Think of Mathew, Andrew, Philip, James and Bartholomew---and the other Apostles---who abandoned Jesus after He was arrested

But Jesus had said to Peter and the Apostles—“whoever listens to you, listens to Me—whoever rejects you, rejects Me”

Jesus right before He ascened into heaven commissioned the Apostles to go out and teach all nations---and He promised that He would be with them until the end of time---implying that when they taught autoratatively that we could know that it was the truth

{Lift up the catechism} I have here a copy of the catechism of the Catholic Church

This contains the authoritative teaching of God that comes to us through His Church

In this we can know that we are hearing the voice of Jesus that comes to us with authority

I remind of the words of Jesus when He was before Pontius Pilate—He said, “I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice.”

So my friends—**we need to listen to the truth**—*if we are to belong to Jesus*

And we can hear His voice through the authoritative teaching of the Church

 What does “authoritative teaching” mean?

It doesn’t mean every word in every homily from every priest is going to be the truth—it doesn’t mean that every word spoken by every bishop or Cardinal is going to be the truth---it doesn’t even mean that every comment spoken by every pope is going to be the truth

But every teaching promulgated by the Church in an official teaching---every time the Church states things in a way that says “this is the revelation of God and this must be believed if you are to be true to Jesus”---we can know we are hearing His voice

*And we need to form our lives by the truth that God has revealed to us*---after all Jesus came into the world—He embraced the cross---so that you and I could know the truth

I do want to caution you---don’t listen to what the news media tells you the Catholic Church is teaching---many in the media are hostile to the Church and are more than willing to mislead us

Don’t think that every time the media says, “The pope said this—or the pope said that---or the Church has changed its teaching---don’t believe what they say

{hold up catechism}We have a source we can turn to so that we can know for certain what the Church teaches---and what the Church teaches is God’s revelation to us

The bible of course—is God’s Word—but the bible can at times be misunderstood

We see in the bible itself—when Satan tempted Jesus—he (the devil) quoted scripture

And so –as we read the bible---*and I would encourage you to do that*---**you need to read with humility**---knowing that you might personally misinterpret the bible

The bible also---while it teaches unchanging principles revealed by God---it often doesn’t deal with the issues we struggle with today---*the principles on how to deal with modern issues are there*---but often the bible doesn’t directly address the issues---test tube babies wasn’t an issue when the bible was written---when it’s permissible to remove a ventilator^^^---what steps must be taken to preserve life and which extraordinary means can be removed without moral guilt^^^ ///---**the principles are in the bible**---but the true interpretation of those issues comes to us through the teaching of His Church---because Jesus promised to be with us always---He promised to send the Holy Spirit so that we could know the truth—He promised that He would not leave us orphaned

So my friends—it’s important to know that we can hear the voice of the Lord today

It’s important to know that Jesus still speaks to us authoritatively today

We just need to be humble enough to hear His voice as He speaks to us through His holy Catholic Church

Let us –like our psalm said:

 Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
    let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
    let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

We can joyfully acclaim the Lord---because we have a sure source we can turn to to know