

Weekly Gospel Readings

1st Sunday of Thoout

Jesus Rejoices in the Father's Will

On this Sunday (09/24/23), the second Sunday of Thoout, the Church reads from [Luke 10:21-28](#).

The Gospel begins with Jesus rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, but what exactly does this mean? St Cyril provides us insight that Jesus is rejoicing “in the works and miracles wrought by means of the Holy Spirit.” He goes further, emphasizing that Jesus “found His cause of rejoicing in the conversion of those that were in error, in the enlightenment of those that were, in darkness, and in the answer of the understanding to the acknowledgment of His glory, of those who had been without knowledge and without instruction.” In this passage we discover that Jesus rejoices in the conversion of the inner man. This aligns perfectly with the words of St Timothy, “He [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” ([1 Tim 2:4](#)).

However, the mysteries of the Lord and His work are only discernible to those who approach them with the simplicity of a child. This brings us to [Matthew 19:13](#), where Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. See how Jesus says “for to such,” emphasizing that those who belong to the kingdom of heaven are *like* little children and not little children in a physical sense. We, therefore, must be like little children, single-hearted and devoted to God.

It's also crucial to understand that when Jesus thanks God the Father for concealing things from the wise and prudent, He is not implying that God hides His salvation from the wise. Instead, this highlights God's boundless love because He doesn't force us to accept salvation; He offers it freely. The “wise and the prudent” then are those who believe they can attain salvation without God's grace. In [Isaiah 45:22](#), this sentiment is reiterated when God says, “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!”. His invitation extends to all the earth, not just a select group of people, but asks that they turn to Him as He is the one who awaits them.

In the next verse, Jesus tells His disciples, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” This reminds us of the silent prayer the Priest prays at the end of liturgy, “Our mouth is filled with gladness and our tongue with joy, for partaking from Your immortal mysteries, O Lord; That which an eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which You, O God, have prepared for them that love Your holy name, and have revealed unto the little children of Your holy church.” One of the greatest mysteries God has given us is His immortal mysteries, His body and blood. Through the mystery of the Eucharist, we become blessed like the Apostles. St. Cyril says we possess these things that the Apostles saw and heard. He says, “We have heard his wonderful teaching. He has given us the knowledge of God the Father, and He has shown Him to us in His own nature”.

The last part of this Sunday's gospel summarizes our faith succinctly. The first commandment is to love God with all your being, and it's only once you fulfill this commandment that can you complete the second commandment, loving your neighbor. Some may argue that it's possible to love our neighbors without loving God, but the Greek text emphasizes agape love, the selfless and sacrificial love that extends even to our enemies, as mentioned in [Matthew 5:44](#). This type of love can only be genuinely attained through love for God, as it is motivated by selflessness, impartiality and, most importantly, originates from God Himself. In 1 John 4, we read that agape love is sourced in God. If we love, we have been born of God and know Him ([1 Jn 4:7](#)). St

John goes on to say that “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” ([1 Jn 4:11](#)). It’s evident then that in order to love not just our neighbors but also our enemies, we should be as little children, single-heartedly devoted to God.

May God grant us eyes and ears receptive to His presence and understanding of His boundless love.

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version
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- Saint Cyril of Alexandria, and R. Payne Smith. *Commentary Upon the Gospel According to St. Luke*. Univ. Press, 1859.