

August 11, 2024 – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

“Drawn to Jesus” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: John 6:35, 41-51

I remember my special interest in Greek Mythology in my High School years. One of my favourite books was the Odyssey by Homer.

According to Greek mythology, sirens (sea nymphs or mermaids) inhabited certain Mediterranean coastal areas. As ships passed by, the sirens sang such enchanting songs that the sailors, drawn by the music, would jump overboard and drown.

Odysseus, the main character in the Odyssey story, was on a ship that had to pass that way. Aware of the powerful allurement of those songs, he ordered that he be bound with ropes to the mast and that the crewmen’s ears be sealed with wax to block out the tantalizing music of the sirens. Having taken such precautions, Odysseus and the rest of the crew were able to sail past without yielding to the lure of the sea nymphs.

In our Gospel story, the Lord Jesus says that no one can come to Him unless drawn by the Father who sent Him.

For all Christians there is an invisible force, invisible power, that makes it almost impossible to resist coming to Jesus. The words written in the Gospel are not a myth. They don’t come from ancient mythology. The power of God and the Gospel that have drawn us all to Jesus do not come from mermaids singing. Our faith is real, it is part of who we are. We believe that the Gospel is a true account of many witnesses who journeyed with Jesus, heard His teachings, witnessed His miracles, and at the end saw Him dead on the cross and three days later saw Him again in a resurrected body.

Today’s Gospel is the third part of the story that began with the Feeding of the Five Thousand. In this third part of the story, Jesus is teaching to some of those who were fed by His miracle.

As we know, they were drawn to Jesus before the multiplication of the bread and the fish took place; they were drawn to Jesus because some were looking for healing, others perhaps were longing for a new teaching, a word of hope, a word of wisdom or for a community to be part of.

There were various reasons why people felt drawn to Jesus, but there were others who came to Him because Jesus had become the stone in their shoes that had to be removed. They are called the “Jews”, the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Sadducees, the Herodians and some others.

They were the ones who tried to discredit the Lord Jesus' truth by saying that He was the son of a carpenter and of a humble woman from Nazareth. For them it was nonsense to believe that the Lord Jesus had come down from heaven.

For those Jews, the words and teachings of our Lord Jesus, sounded like siren's singing, what he said and taught sounded beautiful and enchanting, but it was nothing more than a myth, a myth made up by Jesus Himself.

It is not hard to look at the world in which we live as a world full of sirens singing. Look at the things people today are attracted to, drawn to. From the first hour of the morning to the time we go to bed, many can't live without the phone in their hands, and can't live without social media.

Many are drawn to a world of consumerism, to a world of advertisement that enchants our ears and entices our eyes with a list of items that we don't even need.

Our young people are drawn to a world of drugs and other vices that literally destroy their lives.

And there are many other things that we are drawn to, things that we are hungry and thirsty for. They are nothing but sirens singing that can lead to the death of our soul, our spirit, and if we are not careful, to the death of our physical body. At the end those things leave us with what is like the chorus of the old song by the Rolling Stones that we all know, "I can't get no satisfaction, and I try, and I try, and I try". They will never satisfy us.

In today's Gospel, our Lord Jesus is addressing the people who at the beginning were hungry and thirsty for healing and for words of hope and of good news. The Lord God had drawn all those people to Jesus to receive healing and to listen to His word, to His message, including the "Jews", the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the Herodians. For one reason or another, they were all drawn to Jesus. Unfortunately, they weren't all open to welcome Jesus and His message into their hearts.

As Jesus said:

⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

The Lord will raise us up on the last day. We will be taught by God. We will be fed with the bread of life. These promises are not mermaids singing. The resurrection and eternal life are not a myth or ancient mythology. These promises and the stories and teachings found in the Gospels are true. They were told and written by several witnesses. They are the foundation of our faith. We believe them, and may God help us to be drawn to them and live by them. *Amen.*