

**22<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY YEAR B 2021.**

**PURIFICATION AND REACHING OUT TO OUR NEIGHBOR.**

Every nation, state, county, village and tribe have tradition or culture. We are all surrounded by tradition. The biology of humans is transmitted by genes, and everything else about us, the meaning of human life, family, and community is transmitted through culture and traditions. Our lives are wrapped up in traditions. Unless we capture the traditions of a society, we lose the meaning of what we are doing.

This is the challenge most missionaries face when they don't integrate and inculcate the traditions of the people with Christianity. Many have failed in their evangelization when they miss this point. Others have succeeded fully by involving in the culture of the people.

It is not a surprise to have a double standard of worship in Africa. One is a Catholic on Sunday mornings and at night one is a guest of the medicine traditional person. This happens when the person doesn't get meaning in Christianity. He then must find a solution somewhere else. Christianity then should be addressing the basics of the culture.

We have different traditions in different countries. Some are like **weddings, funerals, birthdays, Christmas, Easter, Lent, political and community traditions, school and parish traditions.** Traditions help the people live in **unity, peace, understanding, and love.** They are like **GPS.** In life they help us reach our destination if we follow them.

The laws and customs we are getting from the first reading were to help the Israelites as a nation in the promised land. So the commandments helped the Christian community, hence the GPS in life, especially in worship. Our culture shouldn't conflict with Christian traditions. They should be in harmony. They complement each other. Traditions are ways of **deepening, renewing, expressing, and**

**sustaining worship** if we involve the whole person .

How is our worship this Sunday? Are we there fully with our whole hearts? Are we fully present with our **heart, body, mind, and spirit?** In the second reading St. James is challenging us not only to be **hearers but also doers** of the word in worship. We must reach out to our neighbors and to those who are **poor, widows, refugees, jobless, homeless, and those suffering in Haiti.**

This is the call of Christ today in the gospel. He stresses the fact that purification and worship should be from within not from without. The source of evil things **fornication, adultery, murder, slander, greed, malice, indecency, envy, pride,** are all from within. We need **purification from within.**

As much as we need clean food, water, and environment so do we need clean **morals.** This is the worst pollution we have in our society. The source of evil is within us, so too, the source of goodness is within our hearts.

We need to purify our hearts. May the good Lord give us his **grace today to purify both the external and internal parts of ourselves and help us to** **be** **available to our NEEDY NEIGHBORS TODAY AND ALWAYS.**