



**August 22, 2010**

## **The Twenty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*"...I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory." Isaiah 66:18*

Dear Friends;

A ten year old boy was very excited as he told his mother about his interesting catechism class and all his new friends. Theirs was a parish in Manhattan's Upper West Side and there were a great variety of ethnic groups. The boy was in a class with Hispanics, Indians, Filipinos, children also from Brazil and Japan. He was proud to have learned a few words in the languages of his new friends.

As his birthday was coming, the boy asked his parents if he could invite his friends from catechism class to his birthday party. When they objected he was upset. Trying to explain their decision, the mother said, "But those children are all so different: they are not like us." When the boy continued to argue, the father said, "Its fine to be together in catechism or at church, but this is *our home!*"

The readings for today call us to remember that we are all God's children. And we are called not only to live that out on Sunday in church but throughout the rest of the week. That means that we not only have to confront the prejudice and fears of others but also in ourselves.

The passage from Isaiah today must have been shocking when it was first proclaimed. Isaiah's contemporaries were used to thinking of themselves as privileged—after all they called themselves the chosen people. It was a lot like when Americans claim to be the greatest nation on earth.

When God speaking through Isaiah tells them that he holds foreigners and strangers as dear; and even some will be made priests in the temple—what a shock. Not only that, but the members of God's people who have been refugees to the many nations are called to be signs to point the way to the God of Israel.

There was a growing recognition throughout the Old Testament that God is not only the God of Israel but God of all peoples. This culminates in Jesus' own ministry which will welcome the non-Jew and foreigner to the Kingdom. No longer can one rely on a privileged status to enter the Kingdom—I am a descendant of Abraham (like saying I am American) as admission.

Those who will be admitted first to the Kingdom will be those who recognize the radical demand of the Gospel—to be brother and sister to those who are very different from me. The invitation of the Gospel is not to elitism but a humble solidarity with all people especially those who the world (read dominant culture or majority) rejects.

Here at St. Anne Church are many different peoples and cultures yet we share a communion of love in Christ through the Eucharist. And throughout the year we have various opportunities to come together in all our diversity. I encourage each and everyone to make these multicultural celebrations a priority and practice for our own admission to the Kingdom. Also as our country comes to debate the issues of immigration I would encourage you to keep the Gospel in mind as the frame work for civil and just discourse.

Peace,

*Fr. Ron*