

NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (5/31-6/1/2008)

Deuteronomy 11/18-28, Psalm 31, Romans 3/21-28, Matthew 7/21-27

From now until the end of November, we shall revel in “Ordinary Time”.

The major feasts and seasons are behind us; now is the time when we put into practice all that we have learned about Jesus.

So, what have we learned about Jesus?

Think about it for a moment.

In the Advent/Christmas season, we rejoiced in the birth of the Savior and in all the events surrounding that important moment in history.

A new era had begun.

Right after the start of the New Year, we dwelt on the words of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Jesus’ state of the ministry speech.

That “Sermon” anticipates Jesus’ agenda for both himself and his disciples.

Then came Lent and Easter, death and resurrection and ascension.

So, we have just completed the cycle of Jesus’ life.

True, we had heard it all before and doubtless nothing new surfaced.

What is new, however, is the cycle of our own life, the many things that happen to us and in us and around us in the course of a year.

Is my life different now than it was a year ago at this time? Probably.

In what way can the example, the words, the teachings, the grace of Jesus, and the presence of the Spirit be applied to this “newness”?

Jesus issues a warning to all of this in the Gospel today.

He says: *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of Heaven. But only the one who does the will of my Father.”*

He seems to be implying that it is not enough to make sounds like a good disciple, or to do the minimal acts of a disciple or to take some credit for being a “nice guy or a “nice gal”.

What is necessary is to hear the words of the Lord and to act on them.

Thus shall our spiritual house be built on firm ground and not on loose-packed sand.

Recently Myanmar (formerly called Burma) was hit by a violent cyclone.

Reports have it that over 70,000 people have died – a figure that is probably too low.

You can bet that the majority of those affected are poor people, people whose homes are in the less attractive places, whose homes are on treacherous hillsides or built on unstable land.

Their plight illustrates the basic truth of Jesus' warning, though undoubtedly these people had very little choice in where their homes were situated.

St. Paul makes a statement today that has caused much discussion over the years.

He says: "*We consider that a person is justified by faith apart from good works.*"

Some erroneously take this to mean that faith in Jesus is enough; good works are secondary.

I think Jesus is saying the two go together; our faith is proved in our works

So, we can't stop at saying that we believe in Jesus, as important as that is.

We have to do what he did, say what he said, and live as he lived.