

Faith Formation: Lent 2021

St Paul's letter to the church at Rome

Dr. Mary DeVille

Week 3: Chapter 5

### Chapter 5: 1-12: Reconciliation in Christ the New Adam

#### Peace with God through Christ

- Opens with the word "therefore", indicates a continuation of Paul's thoughts
- Chapters 1-4: Paul has described the basis for justification
- Chapter 5: Paul begins to describe the benefits of justification

#### Process of Christian growth in 4 steps

- 1) Affliction (an occasion for boasting) produces endurance  
The steadfast will to do what is right and to hold fast to faith in the midst of adversity
- 2) Endurance produces (a pattern of) perseverance
- 3) Perseverance produces a proven character (tested and found faithful)
- 4) A (tested and faithful) proven character (after the fires of tribulation (affliction) produces a solid hope in heavenly glory

#### Reconciliation with God through Christ

- 1) Paul looks back at Christ's death as basis for salvation
- 2) Paul looks forward to Christ completing his work of salvation
- Our spiritual condition "at the appointed time" (confusing term = which time?) Paul means the moment in history when Christ went to his death in fulfillment of God's plan for salvation

### Sin and Death through Adam (Chapter 5: 12-21)

- Vss. 12-21 one of the deepest reflections in the letter
- Perhaps most difficult concept in the letter = Paul's description/definition of death
- Bodily death/spiritual death. Spiritual death = death of our original union with God
- Poor translation in vs. 12 "inasmuch as all sinned". Original Greek reads: "with the result that all sinned"
- This passage sets up Paul's commentary on Original Sin

### Doctrine of Original Sin (Chapter 5: 15-21)

- Doctrine of Original Sin is a difficult doctrine
- 1) Is it a childish concept?
- 2) Is it unjust on God's part?
- 3) What does the Catholic Church teach?

### Paul's comments on Original Sin

- Paul points out what he sees as a radical difference between the sin of Adam and the saving obedience of Christ and a vast disproportion between the two
- Adam's ONE transgression fell on ALL. Jesus' ONE gift of obedience to God enabled salvation for ALL. (In Greek, the word for "many" and the word for "all" is the same word)

### The Church's Teaching on Original Sin

- Catholic theology calls this “the objective redemption”
- Jesus Christ made atonement for the sins of the entire world (I John 2:2), opening the way to salvation for the entire world without distinction.
- Allusion to the Song of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52: 13 – 53: 12)
- Doctrine of Original Sin has long history of theological development
  - 1) 5th-century Augustine of Hippo made the earliest statements on Original Sin
  - 2) 13<sup>th</sup>-century Thomas Aquinas continued and added to Augustine's doctrine
  - 3) 16<sup>th</sup>-century Council of Trent solidified the doctrine and put into accessible language. Death of the body (natural to all living creatures) and Spiritual Death (death of our original union with God) brought about by sin.