

Siem Reap, Cambodia

**Homily by Fr General Arturo Sosa, 15 July 2017**

(Readings: Gen 49:29-32; 50:15-26; Mt 10:24-33)

I am very happy to be with you this morning, to celebrate the Eucharist with you. This is my first time to visit a Buddhist country, and to visit Jesuits and partners in mission working together in such a context. So I am looking forward to learning from you and seeing things in a new way from my short visit.

*Seeing things is a new way*, according to today's readings, leads as to reconciliation and hope. In our first reading, the brothers of Joseph are very afraid after the death of their father Jacob. They fear that their brother Joseph will take revenge on them. In a way, their fear has a basis. They treated Joseph very badly, and caused him terrible suffering when they sold him into slavery because of their hatred and jealousy.

But what we see in today's reading is a very touching story of reconciliation that takes place because of a new way of seeing. Joseph does not deny his suffering or the injustice that happened to him. But through his suffering, he has learned to see things differently. He was able to see God's plan, God making good come out of evil in his life. So he tells his brothers, "Do not be afraid. . . .The evil you planned to do me has by God's design been turned to good." Joseph's words "touched the hearts" of his brothers and made possible a new beginning for them.

In our Gospel, Jesus also helps his disciples to see things in a new way. As he sends out his apostles on mission, they were afraid, knowing that conflicts and hostility awaited them. So he encourages them *three times* not to be afraid! And he does this by pointing out something that they must have seen everyday, but perhaps did not really notice or see in a deep way. "Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing," Jesus reminds them. "So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows!"

God seems to be reminding us that relationships can be healed and fears can be overcome when we learn to *see in a new way*, a way rooted in faith, that is able to see God working in our world, tenderly, lovingly, with a plan to save and to make good come out of evil. It may be good to ask ourselves: what relationships in my life, in our communities, in our world need healing? What fears and anxieties trouble me, or burden those around me? How might I be invited to see in a new way, from the viewpoint of faith?

Our readings remind us too of GC 36 , which speaks of our mission today as a mission of reconciliation and hope. In a world of so much violence, divisions and intolerance, we are called to build bridges, to create a “culture of hospitality” and welcome. In a world where there is so much “fear and anger,” and where “hope is threatened,” we are called to bring the hope of the risen Lord in all our apostolates and ministries. I know that you here in Cambodia have been deeply committed to bringing reconciliation and hope, especially to the poor, since the beginning of this mission. The Word of God today reminds us that this mission of reconciliation and hope involves helping people see themselves, those who have hurt them, those who are different from them, in a new way. It means seeing God working in the midst of broken relationships and difficult situations, and working with him to bring about a more joyful human family.

Perhaps then we can pray for something that seems very simple, in our Eucharist this morning. When Pope Francis met us during GC 36, he surprised us all by telling us that we have to improve in asking God persistently for consolation, so that we too can share that consolation with others. Consolation, which is not just feeling good, but, as St Ignatius reminds us, is an increase of faith, hope and love in us, allows us to see the world in a different way, because we see our gracious God acting in it and inviting us to join him. May the Lord fill each one of us with consolation, so that we can more joyfully promote reconciliation and inspire hope in our world.