



ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT

Lent

February 19, 2023

Reflections

Fr Rodlin

Who Are We?

This question has puzzled the greatest human minds for centuries: from the Greek philosophers to Jesus' time and from the church fathers to modern theologians and scientists. In order to answer this question, we need to go to the source of our existence. If we truly believe that God is the creator of everything, seen and unseen, we can confidently and faithfully say that who we are is rooted in God.

In our quest to discover our origin and identity, as Christians, we believe that God is our creator and created us after His image and likeness. Jeremiah 1:5 says, *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you before you were born; I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”* The holy scriptures say that through our baptism in Christ, we are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart for a specific mission. This mission is to build God's kingdom on earth, which will come to completion at the end of time when all of us will return to God, the source of our existence.

Because we come from a divine origin, even though we are humans, we can be molded, formed, transformed, and divinized. As Christians, we are called to be different from the rest of the world through words and deeds. The gospel for this weekend reiterates such calling and mission. In Matthew 5:38-48, **Jesus says to his disciples, “You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the one as well, you shall love everyone, including your enemy, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father.”** So, while our identity is rooted in God, it seems that throughout our lives, we need to nurture



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that identity; we need to claim it as our own; we need to embrace the ways of the Lord; we need to learn to think as He thinks and acts as He acts. That's how we can claim our identity and make it a reality.

The **CHOSEN** series we have been watching as a parish, there is an episode where Jesus talked with the children. Jesus as a teacher, interacts with them, making them ask questions and making sure all of them get to be part of the conversation while not shaming the one that "hogs" the spotlight. He asks them to reflect and search for wisdom rather than respond with simple, easy answers. And letting them know that there is nothing wrong with not fully understanding scripture. He teaches them how they are special and how to seek not only intellectual knowledge but wisdom, **God's wisdom**. In other words, the wiser we become in the ways of the Lord, the more our identity is rooted in Him. The more we nurture our identity as children of God, the more our roots will grow deeper. Like plants, when we are rooted in Christ and live for him alone, we grow stronger and flourish into who He has designed us to be. God will continue to prune us, mold us, and transform us throughout this life.

Even though there are many theories on who we are and where we come from: The Big Bang Theory is that we evolved from Chimpanzees; we are too special to be products of those theories. We are made in the image and likeness of God, our creator. God expects us to become who He is to us, for the world:

all loving, all forgiving, and merciful.

That is how the world will know who we really are.

Pax,

Rev. Paul Rodriguez