

Sunday 26th June 2022



My dear brothers and sisters, I extend my greetings of peace and love to your families and loved ones. Please join me to reflect on the following Question: **Are Believers living in a world of Make- believe?!!**

What kind of person thinks there are destructive drugs in the world? What would you call someone who insists that corpses are dead? "A realist", right?

Well, today's first reading denies the existence of destructive drugs and in the gospel Jesus tells the mourners that the dead girl in front of them is asleep. Are believers not realists? Do we live in a world of make believe, refusing to accept facts? That is a question we must not avoid. And the answer is not a once- for- all exercise. Each day, we are faced with facts that should call into question our faith in God or in Goddess.

The philosopher Miguel de Unamuno said, "Faith that does not doubt is dead faith". An untested, unchallenged faith is not faith at all, but a wilful refusal to inhabit this universe rather than a world of make- believe.

So, what are we to make of our readings today? Are the realists right or the faith right? Perhaps the real question is: "what is reality" The "realist" is someone who uses a common sense approach to life. If science and the evidence of our senses indicate that something is real, then it is real. By the same token, what cannot be verified by the same means is unreal. Can't see or measure God or Goddess? Then, God or Goddess does not exist or is irrelevant. But is this realism? "Realists" accuse believers of avoiding reality, but might we not say that it is the "realist" who avoids reality, who cannot accept what will never fit inside human concepts or understanding. Perhaps the atheist is the one who cannot accept reality because it wouldn't fit into a human head.

So then, what is reality? An easy answer for the believers is to say that what God wills is real and that anything that goes against the divine will, no matter how obvious to us, is basically unreal. In that case, dangerous drugs and death and sin and injustice and all manner of evil are unreal because they are not the will of God. Today's reading from the book of wisdom says that: "Through the devil's, envy, death entered the world; and those who belong to his company experience it". It is an attractive idea. But, is it too easy? If only the things God wills as good are real, then what do we make of the man-made sufferings, or the cross of Christ, and his call to take up our own crosses to follow him? No, we cannot deny the reality of pain, suffering, evil, and death in the world. We cannot claim that only those who belong to devil experience them. They are not the whole reality, but they are a real part of it.

So, the world as God wills it and the world as we experience it are both real. To accept only one while ignoring the other is not realistic. The atheist and the other worldly believer are of the same ilk. It is by accepting the co-reality of good and evil that the believers of God or Goddess are the true realists.

Because I am a realist who believes that God loves me, I can accept the other realities of my life. I suffer, I can err or sin, I love, I smile and I will die. But because reality involves the love of God or Goddess, I can be confident that my suffering is United with God's suffering, that my errors or sins are forgiven and that my death is a sleep that through God's love will lead to the fullness of reality. Amen.

May the realities of this life clear your path with peace and God's wisdom, As my mother once said to me: "Obughi ajo ikuku nile biara imebi uzo gi, ufodi biara ichupuru gi ndi iro nochiri uzo gi nile, ma gozikwa gi"

It means, "Not all storms come to disrupt your life, some come to clear your path, and bless you with peace and God's favours" Have a peace filled week and remember to smile!

Yours Affectionately,
Fr. Nicholas Nwanzi.