

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Year B: Am 7:12-15; Ps 85; Eph 1:3-14; Mk 6:7-13
July 18, 2021
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Have you ever been surprised to discover that something you thought was only a possibility or a consequence was actually planned all along? For example, you might meet someone by what seems at first to be only coincidence or happenstance, but then you later come to be convinced that God had arranged the meeting as part of His plan for your life. Some people who fall in love think like this.

Well, this is how St. Paul felt when it was revealed to Him that the Incarnation of Christ was God's initial plan from the beginning, from eternity. Often, we think that God first created the world and was then caught off guard by the Fall and the rebellion of our first parents, and so He then came up with the plan to send His Son into the world to redeem us and to restore His project and plan of creation. But in the second reading today, from the Letter to the Ephesians, we hear the revelation given to St. Paul that the Incarnation of Christ was God's plan from the beginning, from before the Fall and even before creation. St. Paul writes, *"In all wisdom and insight, [God] has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in [Christ] as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth."* *"God the Father ... has blessed us in Christ ... as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will."*

This revelation means that Jesus Christ was not a back-up plan of God the Father for a fallen world. No, the Incarnation of Christ was God's plan from the beginning, from eternity, because even before creation, God saw that the Fall would occur, and so He planned and willed that His Son would be sent into the world to redeem us and restore our relationship with Him by adoption through Christ. This great truth is called the "Supremacy of Christ," because it means that Christ Jesus was God's supreme plan for the world. From the beginning, God's plan of creation included the Incarnation, as the way that we would be reconciled and related to God after the Fall.

And this is why the Church teaches that "[t]he Lord [Jesus] is the goal of human history ..., the center of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to all its yearnings."¹ Or, as Pope St. John Paul II taught, "Jesus Christ is

¹ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 45.

the answer to the question posed by every human life,² because relating to God through Christ is the destiny desired by God for all of us. This is also why St. Paul would later write, “*For to me life is Christ*” (Phil 1:21), and, “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ [who] lives in me*” (Gal 2:20). St. Paul came to understand that apart from Christ, our lives lose their ultimate meaning and purpose.

So, what does all of this mean for each of us? Well, as Christians, we should understand and be convinced that, even before God created us, He planned and desired for us to be reconciled to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. This means that our faith in Christ and our relationship with Him should be the “program” and pattern for our whole lives. Everything we do should be determined by our faith in Christ. All the decisions and choices we make should be influenced and determined by the teachings of Christ. If we believe that Christ is the Savior of the world and the link to our relationship with God the Father, then we come to understand that His teachings are not merely good and optional ideas, but rather the indispensable truth about how to live.

And this also means that our faith in Christ is not some historical accident, or a quirk of fate, simply because we happened to be born to Christian parents, but rather it’s God’s plan and desire for us from all eternity. And it also means that faith in Christ and adoption through Him is God’s eternal plan and desire for *all* people. God does not create only *some* people to know Christ and to be redeemed by Him. No, God wants all souls to know and follow Christ, who is “*the way and the truth and the life*” (Jn 14:6). And this is why we must share the faith with others.

There is nothing arrogant or exclusive about believing that Christianity is the one true faith, because God “*wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all*” (1Tim 2:4-6). And, “*[t]here is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved*” (Acts 4:12). For, God “*has made known to us the mystery of his will ... that he set forth in [Christ] as a plan for the fullness of times,*” and “*God ... has blessed us in Christ ... [and] chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ*” Our faith in Christ is not some mere coincidence or accident – it was planned by God all along, from the beginning, from all eternity. All praise, glory and honor to Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

² John Paul II, Homily at Mass in Orioles Park, October 8, 1995.