

Yesterday we were privileged to have Fr. Ryszard Szmydki O.M.I . Under Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples to preside over our end of term Eucharist and present the Certificates and Diplomas to our participants who had completed their programmes. It was a beautiful liturgy in our own Chapel in Il Carmelo followed by a lovely meal. It brought to a close what had been a most successful term.

Fr. Ryszard's homily was greatly appreciated and he kindly gave us his copy which we are delighted to share with you on our website.

Homily, St. Anselm's Institute (Readings: Jer 23:5-8; Mat 1: 18-24)

Dear Brothers and Sisters. We gather to celebrate the Eucharist, the Thanksgiving to God, for the Re-Birth of Christ in us, especially in you, Participants of the Programme at the Institute of St. Anselm. In this Eucharist, we acclaim with the Psalmist: **Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, who alone works wonders!**

Today's Word of God brings light to this event, enlightens us about what we are thankful for, for the wonders happening among you and in you in these past months.

1) We have heard the Prophet Jeremiah proclaiming, *"See, the days are coming when I will raise a virtuous Branch for David, who will reign as true king and be wise, **practising honesty and integrity in the land.** And this is the name he will be called: **The-Lord-our-integrity.**"*

This prophesy is already fulfilled with the Birth of Jesus Christ. The Christ is our integrity. He is our Salvation!

This prophesy became a reality in our life through the baptism; in these months this prophesy was very close to you, as you were working hard on your own integration: on the Re-Birth of Christ in you. Today you can say: **The-Lord-our-integrity!**

2) The Prophet Jeremiah presents also a beautiful image of a journey: Lord is bringing back, from Exile, from the countries of dispersion - the descendants of the House of Israel - bringing them home, letting them **live on their own soil!**

Entering this programme, you started a journey, a "journey in Christ": "from the exile to your own soil"! From a dispersion towards integrity. The Holy Spirit was accompanying you, with the help of concrete persons, journeying in community groups. Now, you are better aware that our emotions may compel us live in dispersion, in Exile; very often, they impede us to live "on our own soil", to be free; that is why, especially our emotions are in need of redemption and healing, in order that we can love God with all our heart and love our neighbours as ourselves.

The Son of God is born for us and for our salvation. He is Emmanuel, "God with us". By the grace of God, the Re-Birth of Christ in us allows us to "live on our own soil" - it means to experience and to enjoy the integrity of our spirit, soul and body, to experience the joy of freedom of "the sons and daughters of God".

3) Today's Gospel reminds us about the important role of Joseph, husband of Mary, in the history of salvation, especially in the Birth of Jesus. Joseph, at first, is afraid and shocked by the news that his wife Mary "was found to be with child before they came to live together". Joseph was looking for an honest and reasonable solution, "unwilling to put her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly".

Joseph needs a spiritual help to discern properly, he needs the grace of God in order to enter into the mystery of God, to be part of the history of salvation. *"The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream*

and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. She conceived a son by the Holy Spirit'.

Brothers and Sisters, we too are in need of redemption in order to enter fully into the history of our personal salvation. We need the help of the grace of God, especially in discerning and integrating the wounds, painful events in our personal history.

That is why, the Lord sent you angels, =“Messengers” = Fr. Len and the Staff Members! They are here to tell you **“do not be afraid”!** ***Your history is the history of salvation!*** **Do not be afraid to let the Light of Christ enter into your life!** These “Angels” are often inviting you to pray: **“Christ be our light, shine in our hearts”**. With Christ present in your life, today you can see that the Lord works wonders! That your personal history is full of God’s love and compassion!

In this Eucharist, let us say with grateful hearts - ***Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, who alone works wonders!***

Ryszard Szmydki OMI