

God Desires All to Be Saved (25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1 Timothy 2:1-8—The One Mediator

¹ *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men,* ² *for kings and all who are in high positions,* that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. ³ *This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,* ⁴ *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* ⁵ *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* ⁶ *who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time.* ⁷ *For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.* ⁸ *I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling...* (1 Tim 2:1-8)

1. Universal Intercessions: prayers be made for “all men,” including (2:8)
2. Universal Will: God desires “all men” (*pantas anthrōpos*) to be “saved” (2:4)
 - a. Salvation: to be “saved” (2:4)
 - b. Truth: to come to “knowledge of the truth” (2:4)
3. Monotheism: there is “one God” (2:5)
4. Salvation: “one mediator” (Greek *mesitēs*) between God and men (2:5)
5. Gentiles: a teacher of “the Gentiles” (a.k.a. “pagans”) (2:7)

Living Tradition

John Damascene: *One should also bear in mind that God antecedently wills all to be saved and to attain to his kingdom [cf. 1 Tim 2:4]. For he did not form us to be chastised, but, because he is good, that we might share in his goodness.* Yet, because he is just, he does wish to punish sinners. So, the first is called *antecedent will* and *approval*, and it has him as its cause; the second is called *consequent will* and *permission*, and it has ourselves as its cause. This last is twofold: that which is by dispensation and for our instruction and salvation, and that which is abandonment, as we have said. These, however, belong to those things which do not depend upon us. As to the things which do depend upon us, the good ones he wills antecedently and approves, whereas the evil, which are essentially bad, he neither wills antecedently nor consequently, but permits them to the free will. (John Damascene, *On the Orthodox Faith* 2.29; trans. F. H. Chase)

Catechism: *It is from God's love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigor of her missionary dynamism,* “for the love of Christ urges us on.” Indeed, God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” [1 Tim 2:4]; that is, God wills the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth. Those who obey the prompting of the Spirit of truth are already on the way of salvation. But the Church, to whom this truth has been

entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the truth. *Because she believes in God's universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary.* (CCC 851)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. How does prayer for “all men” (1 Tim 2:1) correlate with God’s desire for “all men” to be “saved” (1 Tim 2:4)? What is the context of Paul’s injunction?

For Further Reading

1. George T. Montague, S.M. *First and Second Timothy, Titus*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008.
2. Peter Gorday, *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2000.