

## 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

I joined Father Felipe Suárez for the first mass in his home parish in Cucunubá, Colombia, on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. He had just celebrated two first masses here at St. Anthony's, one in English and one in Spanish. His pueblo is 450 years old and has a beautiful church. Felipe and his family are well known to that community. Nearly 2000 people attended this mass, and they all made us visitors feel at home. The entrance procession started at the Suárez family home, and the mass concluded with a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the city square. The liturgy lasted four hours, and the atmosphere was festive. I read a letter from Archbishop Joseph Naumann greeting all the people there. Father Felipe returns to Kansas City in two weeks, and he'll begin work at Holy Cross Church here in the Northeast.

Colombia is beautiful. The altitude of Bogotá is over 8000 feet, and the state of Cundinamarca has impressive mountains and breathtaking vistas. We stayed near the milk capital of the country, and we saw vast coal mines and salt mines. The people are devoted to farming their productive land for the common good. One benefit of travel is to see how beautiful the world is.

This week Pope Francis issued an encyclical to make the point strongly. He says the world is beautiful, but we have to take better care of it. The title of the encyclical, *Laudato Sí*, comes from a canticle by St. Francis of Assisi, in which he invites all created things to praise their maker. The Holy Father calls the earth "our common home," and he asks all people to care for it together. He appeals not just to Catholics, but to all humanity, even nonbelievers. We all inhabit the same earth, and we all need to care for it. Pope Francis asks rich nations to lead the way because poor people are victims when the earth's climate changes. They have to migrate, abandon their homes, and find work all over again. All of us can help. We can recycle products from paper to electronics. We can avoid wasting water and food. When elections come, we can vote for proposals that will help protect this good earth. These may seem like small matters, but they will make a difference if we all join in.

Today's first reading reveals the majesty of God over all creation. It comes from the Book of Job, where Job has been struggling with many misfortunes: the loss of members of his family, his own good health, and his property. Job cries out to God that this is not fair, and God basically responds to Job saying, "You don't know what you're talking about." God describes the birth of the sea as roaring waters bursting from some enormous womb, needing to be contained within walls and clothed in clouds and darkness. He asks Job about the creation of the sea, "Did you do this?" God answers his own question: No, "I set limits for [the sea] and fastened the bar of its door, and said Thus far shall you come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled." Further proof of God's command over the sea is Jesus stilling the storm in the gospel. We think we know how God should act to protect our lives, but God knows a lot more than we do.

Even so, God has entrusted this earth to us, the lands on which we walk, the air we breathe, and the waters of the mighty sea. We owe it to God to take care of his creation. This week let's be especially mindful of the world around us and take good care of our common home.