

Homily for the Feast of St. Catherine de Ricci

First Reading: Hebrews 13:7-8

February 4, 2005

Today's reading from the Letter to the Hebrews concludes with these words:

Remember your leaders who spoke the word of truth to you, consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Who has spoken the truth to us? Whose lives beckon us to imitate their faith?

One week ago we celebrated the feastday of Thomas Aquinas. Imagine that moment in his prayer when his insight into the truth of who Jesus is came so intensely that he laid down his pen, stopped writing and said that all he had done was straw; all that mattered was Christ.

Today we celebrate the feastday of Catherine di Ricci. The prayer life of our sister was extraordinary, and we are humbled to recall how her devotion to the Passion of Christ was so profound that she received the mystic experience of the stigmata .

Next week we will honor the memory of our Mother Pia. In June 1903 on the Feast of the Sacred Heart she discloses the motivation for all she did in her service to our Congregation. Simply yet profoundly she wrote in her diary: "I lay at Thy feet my heart, my mind and my will. I will only--I desire only Thy love, Thy honor--Thy will."

Last night our beloved Sister Theresita returned home to God, and this morning we remember her. I will miss her joyful heart, wellspring of her wonderful smile. I will never forget that after years of teaching she generously served us in the laundry by folding our sheets and towels. Most of all, I will remember her in our Motherhouse chapel at prayer throughout the day--content in the presence of Jesus whom she loved.

Thomas Aquinas, Catherine di Ricci, Maria Pia, Theresita--our Dominican brother and sisters who have spoken the word of truth to us: Thomas as teacher, Catherine de Ricci as mystic, Maria Pia as foundress, Theresita as our sister. They invite us to imitate their faith, their faith in Jesus Christ. They point beyond themselves. Their lives give us courage as they speak this word of truth to us through the witness of their lives: Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

--S. Mary Catherine