

## Homily of September 10, 2006

from 10:45 a.m. Mass

Fr. Gerard Jean-Juste

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Father Joyce introduction:

Sometimes, wonderful and amazing things are going on in the world and we are deaf to it. We don't hear it. We first heard of the work of Father Jean-Juste, Gerry, in Haiti last January through the "What If" Foundation. And we helped a little in the wonderful work of his parish, feeding the starving children of Haiti. I think, since then, most of us have heard also that he has been perhaps the most prominent, outspoken critic of the overthrow of democracy in Haiti, and has been in prison twice because of it, freed recently only because of the international outcry, and is dealing with leukemia. He is with us in the Bay Area to receive an honorary doctorate degree. And we are delighted and proud to have him with us. (Lots of applause!)

Father Jean-Juste:

My heart is full with gratitude to God Almighty who gives me this great opportunity to visit Christ the King. It's amazing. I admire Father Joyce. I admire all of you. It's not a matter to flatter you. It's real. It's a lively, lovely community. It's great! Long time, I have not seen such an openness in my Church, in our Church. This is great! And I see the technology I've been using. I was looking for a songbook. You have it on the wall! Oh, my gosh! I said to myself, "I better sit down and adjust my eyes. I will learn a lot here and bring back something home." Oh, my God, I love you!

For today, you knew what Jesus said and I don't want to take your time. It's clear. Plus, after the Gospel, you hear what St. James said. We must put into practice what we believe. This is exactly, since my childhood, what I have been trying to do, not to be a hypocrite in front of God. I know I am a sinner, like anybody else, but we are now approaching God, asking forgiveness and offering myself to his service. And so that's my style. Every day I try to open my ears and listen to what God wants. It's amazing, different assignments God could give you when you open your ears! It's amazing! It's disturbing sometimes because, you know, so many people are trying to come to the United States. And then, here am I. I was ordained in New York. I studied in Canada and I studied in different schools here and God has called me back to Haiti. And I love it! So, it's not a matter that Haiti is poor, I should not go back there. But God wants me, wants to use me to bring a message home, help to put in practice his word. Also, be with my brothers and sisters who are desperate, and try to see if change can come. And the kingdom of God should come wherever his children are. So, this is what I am trying to do and I find so many

of you who help me to do this job. And so today, I don't want to be long but I think I have learned enough here, the smile, the joy. One person was telling me, "Oh, we're so joyful with Father Joyce." I said, "That's his name? Father Joy-ce!" So, sometimes we carry on with our names. Joy-ce! And thank you so much, Father Joy-ce! And I hope someday when I come back, when I go back to Haiti, you can visit with us. You see, that's my style. Be at ease with people the same way you are. I love it! So, there are two of you who are visiting me in Haiti, who are visiting St. Clare Church in Haiti, and I hope more of you can come and see. Also, when you share with your brothers and sisters in need, understand that you share with God because that's the way it is. Somebody just mentioned Matthew 25. This is what we see. "I was hungry. You fed me. I was in jail. You visited me. I was sick. You take care of me." So, continue to put in practice the word of the Lord and someday we shall be with God forever and ever and we shall be happy forever and ever. I may not have a chance to meet you again. I don't know. But I know for sure when I go to heaven, when WE go to heaven, we look for each other. All right, thank you so much! (Much applause!)

Father Joyce concludes:

I mentioned at the other Masses this weekend that in the early church, Christians were known as "the people who see" because, in the light of Jesus and in the light of the gospel, they kind of saw what was going on. And they also were called "the people who sing" because of the joy of Christ in their hearts. And I can see that joy, even all that you have been through. Gwen Watson told us about visiting you in prison, and finding great joy. Well, we also have to be a people who listen and listen to the message of those who are suffering, and those who are doing something about it. And I just hope and pray that we as a community do that. A group are going to be meeting with Gerry after Mass to strategize of other ways that we can assist in his ministry and work. We didn't take up a collection. We're not doing that. But, if anybody wants to do anything, we know where to send the checks. You can put "Haiti" or "What If Foundation." Let us know later at some point and we will be looking for other ways to help and assist and to walk with him "until we meet again." I hope it is sooner than you mentioned but... I hope it is now, AND then!