**8th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [2nd March, 2014]**

READINGS: Isaiah 49:14-15 / Ps. 62 / 1 Cor. 4:1-5 / Matthew 6:24-34

THEME: THE LORD IS MY EVERLASTING SECURITY

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INTRODUCTION

The message of the day is: ‘THE LORD IS MY EVERLASTING SECURITY’. He cannot disappoint us; as long as we trust in Him, He will never fail us in this life and hereafter. We should, therefore, seek the Lord above every other person and above everything (Mt. 6:33). From the readings, I pick out three images to illustrate today’s message:

* From the **first reading**, I pick the image of a **mother**: the **Lord is the mother who will never forget us**, says the prophet.
* From the **Responsorial Psalm**, I pick two images:
  + **A rock**: the **Lord is the ancient and permanent rock we can rely on forever**!
  + **A fortress**: the **Lord, like a fortress, ensures our protection forever.**

MOTHER

In Isaiah 49:15, the Lord spoke to his people through the prophet: ‘Does a mother forget her baby at the breast, or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you’. The natural connection between the mother and child from conception, through pregnancy, birth, breast feeding, etc, is such that normally the mother would not abandon her child. However, we know of cases where babies have been damped, in bushes for example, by their mothers. Thus, the Lord says, even if a mother would abandon a child, He will never do that.

The Lord, being our everlasting mother, conceived us not for only nine months, but long ago, at the time He created the world. The natural mother would not know the features of the child before birth, but God knew not only our features but our potentials and talents before we were born; in fact, he designed us in our mother’s womb. He who knows our ‘worth’ and knows why He brought us into this world, says that He will never abandon us. Beloved, may we today and always, enjoy the motherly love and care of God! Beloved, if you feel no one loves you nor cares for you, may you begin to experience the motherly love of God! Amen!

ROCK

Psalm 62 says: ‘In God alone is my soul at rest, my help comes from Him. He alone is my **Rock**.’ A rock is a firm ground, difficult to move away. Even if today we can move some rocks by machines or blast them, the good news is that God is the **unmoved** Rock; He is the Rock in whose presence dynamite is silenced.

If someone has ever disappointed you, then I have good news for you: rely on the Lord, the everlasting Rock! His promises are as sure as Himself! Beloved since none of us is certain of his/her future let us depend on the EVERLASTING ROCK; Let us seek the Lord first.

FORTRESS

Responsorial Psalm: ‘God…alone is my …stronghold, my fortress’. A fortress is a building or a place that has been strengthened and protected against attacks. In our colonial history we are familiar with castles and fortresses. The Dutch had a fort in the then Gold Coast (now Ghana), but the English took it over. Thus, however strong an earthly fortress is, one may be defeated. We know how in recent times even in North Africa, presidents who had what seemed unapproachable strongholds have been brought down from their office.

However in God, we have a stronghold, a fortress that no one can conquer; indeed no one can dare to approach. I pray that God will be your stronghold and your protected fortress forever. Amen!