

Homily For Tuesday of the 10th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - June 9, 2020

The Feast of St. Ephrem, Deacon and Doctor

1 Kings 17:7-16 "Elijah said to her: Do not be afraid. The jar of meal was not emptied, nor did the oil fail"

Psalm 4:1-7 "Know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself. He hears when I call to him."

Mark 5:13-16 "If salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored."

Who We Are (Salt) and What We Do (Light)

Introduction

Revelation. God reveals himself. God unveiled himself. A little at a time, so we could understand, the God of the universe has shown himself to us. We just celebrated Trinity Sunday, God showing himself as three, a great mystery but also one into the middle of which we are called.

One theme that is evident throughout the Old Testament, as God showed himself to our faith ancestors, the Israelite people, is that he doesn't need us to accomplish anything. But, the whole point of bringing us to being, the whole meaning of our lives is so that we will participate with the Lord of all. We were made in his image. That's who we are. That's salt. But we were also made to reflect God to the world. That's light.

Elijah

Today again, these themes of God's action and our participation, are evident. Elijah is the great prophet, who is especially attuned to God's will. God asks him to go to the foreign land outside of Israel and just hang out. Elijah leaves Israel. He goes to where there is a poor widow with a son. She is preparing one more meal, a last meal. She has nothing. She is preparing a last meal for she and her son, knowing there is nothing left and no hope for anything, leaving only death as a possibility. A last meal ... followed by death. Glimpses into what God will do.

But that life for her family is restored by the miracle of multiplication, which Elijah performs. Like Jesus will do with loaves and fishes, Elijah does with bread and oil. Abundance from poverty. Life from certain death.

Matthew

The fullness of what God wants to do for us is a person. That is Jesus Christ. As human, he perfectly submits to the will of the Father. He is salt. As God, he accomplishes what we could not on our own. He is light. These are the two images that are the foundation of the Sermon on the Mount.

Salt: Salt preserves. Salt flavours. But if salt loses its saltiness, it is thrown out. A puzzle perhaps. No, the point is that salt is salt. If it lost its flavour, it would stop being what it is. It would be sand or dust or something else. It would lose its identity.

Today, we are searching for identity, imagining that we have to create our own. We are doing it by trying to create ourselves, and promote ourselves as the people who believe that science will save us. Then along comes the invisible micro organism that brings death, and brings us to our knees. And still we say no to God. We will figure this out ourselves. But in the middle of saving ourselves from something we can't even see, violence breaks out, reminding us that we are so far from figuring out how to be people of peace. We have stopped being what we are, created by God as salt.

Light: Jesus is the light which shines in the dark, John says in his Gospel. But Jesus says today: YOU are the light of the world. How did we get to be the light? This is the miracle of how God acts in the world. He gives us himself, then tells us to go out and DO the things that show HIS light to a world in spiritual darkness. Has there been a time in our memory where darkness covered so much of the world at the same time?

If we are faithful as disciples, we will become a light to all around us. That they may see your good deeds and glorify God, who is the source of light, made present in Jesus Christ, then shining for the world through his disciples. That's us.

When Christians fail to be saints, when we fail to live the beatitudes and be light, the world suffers. But when we imitate Christ's love, mercy and generosity, the world will see our good deeds and glorify our heavenly father.

Conclusion/Call to Action

We will not have victory even over this pandemic, without God's intervention. Our efforts will fail. This is not my prophecy. This is the evidence of history, the history of salvation, of God's saving of the world. We cannot have physical victory over worldly trials if we do not allow God to bring spiritual victory over the brokenness of our hearts, to make us salt that flavours and preserves and gives life.

Newman's prayer "Radiating Christ" Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my souls. Jesus, stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. The Light, O Jesus, will be all from you. None of it will be mine. It will be you shining on others through me.

Be salt. That is who you are.

Be light. That is what you are called to do.