

Homily For Tuesday of the 11th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - June 18, 2022

2 Chronicles 24:17-25 "They abandoned the God of their ancestors and served idols."

Psalm 89:3-4,28-34 "I will punish their transgression but I will not remove my steadfast love."

Matthew 6:24-34 "You cannot serve God and wealth."

Where Is Your Heart

Introduction

In school, I learned how to use an apostrophe, that little punctuation mark that has several uses. It looks to me like that poor little bit of grammar has lost its way. We need to restore the apostrophe to its former glory when children were drilled on punctuation marks. Now, doesn't that sound like the opening line of a fascinating homily. Not really. However, don't turn off your attention just yet. I have something for you. Or at least Mary has something for you.

Our Lady's Saturday

This is a day we call Our Lady's Saturday. The apostrophe is a way of saying that this day belongs to Mary. The Church has given it to her. For her, Saturday was the Sabbath, which is the day to honour the Lord who made heaven and earth, the 7th day. All creation belongs to him. We honour Mary for many reasons and at many different times of the liturgical year. Today we could say that we honour her because the life she had, the life that was her possession, she gave back to the God who asked her for it.

In that moment of the annunciation, the angel Gabriel waited for her. She had two choices. There are always two choices. Jesus reminds us over and over again in the sermon on the mount that there are two choices. In her 'yes', she gave her fertility to the Holy Spirit, her new spouse. She gave her heart as an oblation, as an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord.

Until the Lord's passion and death on the cross, hers was the most perfect sacrifice possible because it was her heart. That's what God had always asked for,

that people sometimes were willing to give, but most times not. King David, the man after God's own heart, was the one who understood this as we read in Psalm 51: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a contrite heart.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, we sanctify Saturday in honor of the glorious Virgin Mary who remained unshaken in faith all day Saturday after the death of her Divine Son." She is the "preparer" who helps us reap the fruit of our labour on Sunday, the day of the Resurrection.

Matthew

Jesus teaching is that you can have possessions. That is not an evil. But don't pour your heart into them. How many times do we say that someone put his heart and soul into an earthly good.

Money is a powerful idol. Money can't buy spiritual goods. But it can get you things, the distractions of the world. It can also get us the illusion that we are secure. It wants to make us anxious about the future so that we will hoard it in the present. Generosity is destroyed in the process. But Jesus says you can't serve money and God. Neither will settle for just part of your attention. Both want your whole heart. St. Jerome points out that Jesus did not say: he who *has* riches. Rather, he who *serves* riches.

Jesus says the only security against an uncertain future is our certainty in God. When we put our trust in spiritual goods, we stop worrying about physical goods. If we find ourselves anxious because of ups and downs in the economy, we need to check our hearts. But when we decide to serve only God, there is freedom. The things of the earth are always going to be a temptation. But God doesn't want our material success. He wants true peace and happiness for us, peace that surpasses all understanding.

2 Chronicles

In the passage from Chronicles, King Joash and the people had turned away from God to trust in worldly alliances and false worship. So often those go together. They had kept their hearts from God. They had dragged their souls through the

mud of idolatry. Prophets were sent to correct them. They did not just ignore that Word. They killed the one through whom that Word came, the Old Testament Zechariah. The New Testament Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, became the parents of the greatest of the prophets, John who would prepare the way of the Lord, the fullness of the Word of God. God's perfect plan of salvation will always be advanced. The only question for us is whether we will participate in his plan.

Conclusion/Call to Action

Life can be stressful at times. It is natural for us to look for ways to ease that stress. Many of those are quite wholesome. Ultimately, though, our freedom from stress, our peace, is going to come from God. That's not easy. Pope Francis says that it takes our courage to follow Jesus closely. The Catechism gives a more formally written answer: "Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow."

This is the day that the Lord has made. This is the day that belongs to God. In the Church, we give this day to Mary. She, in turn, shows us the way of the true disciple. She gives it back to God and, in the process, gives birth to the Saviour. We can imitate her or not. On this, Our Lady's Saturday, the choice seems clear.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *Let us bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.*

Collect: *Keep your family safe, O Lord, that, relying on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection.*

2 Chronicles: *They abandoned the house of the Lord, the God of their ancestors and served the sacred poles and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this. Yet he sent prophets to bring them back to the Lord, but they would not listen. The spirit of God took possession of Zechariah. He stood above the people and said, "Thus says God, because you have forsaken the Lord, he has also forsaken you." By command of the king, the officials stoned him to death. As he was dying, Zechariah said, "May the Lord see and avenge?" The army of Aram came up against Joash. The Lord delivered into their hand a very great army, because they had abandoned the Lord. Joash was wounded and his servants killed him because of the blood of the son of the priest Jehoiada. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.*

Psalms: *I have made a covenant with my chosen one. I have sworn to my servant David that I will establish your descendants forever. I will keep my steadfast love for him and my covenant with him will stand firm. If his children forsake my law, I will punish their transgression. But I will not remove from him my steadfast love.*

Matthew: *Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. A slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? If God clothes the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith. It is the Gentiles who strive for these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.*