

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 13th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II**

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

**Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12** "Hear the prophet: I brought you out of Egypt. I will punish you for your iniquities."

**Psalms 5:4-7** "The Lord hates the bloodthirsty, but I will bow toward your holy temple in fear of you."

**Matt. 8:23-27** "A 'seismos' arose, the boat was being swamped. Lord save us! Why are you afraid?"

### **What Sort of Man Is This?**

#### **Introduction**

During a time of great prosperity and peace in Israel, God's prophet Amos predicts a coming storm. During a sudden and terrifying storm on the sea of Galilee, Jesus brings about a profound calm. During the calm before both storms, no one was afraid. But that kind of thing is all in the past, isn't it? These are ancient stories. Surely, they do not apply to us. Unfortunately, I think you know that they do.

Consider just 120 years ago. The 1900 Paris Exposition was a world's fair held in Paris, France, to celebrate the achievements of the past century and to accelerate development into the next. Fifty million people went to see displays of many technological innovations, including the moving sidewalk, diesel engines, talking films, escalators and the first magnetic audio recorder.

It was a time of great peace and even greater optimism. Humanity was transcending with its new mastery over nature. Three events shocked the world out of that dream. First was the sinking of the Titanic, man's greatest sign of technological conquest, by a simple bit of nature, a chunk of ice floating in the ocean. Then, the horrors of the First World War shattered the dream of peace. That ended with the devastation of the so called Spanish Flu, which killed 50 million people, the exact same number who went to that fair. These events were devastating for the psyche of western culture. Why couldn't we save ourselves from these catastrophic events?

## **Amos**

Amos was from the southern kingdom of Judah, but was sent to the northern kingdom of Israel 760-750. The problem there was that it was a time of prosperity and peace, but also of even greater social corruption: The poor ignored, many injustices done to those too weak to protect themselves.

Amos prophesied at the cult temple of Bethel, denouncing the hollow prosperity of his time and predicting the overthrow of Israel. He was looked at as a troublemaker. He was disturbing their perceived peace. The priests of the day did not tolerate a call back to holiness.

Amos spoke: I brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. Therefore, prepare to meet your God, O Israel. Using the psalmist's words today: You are not a God who delights in wickedness. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful. Not thirty years later, the storm happened. The northern kingdom of Israel was utterly destroyed. They did not listen.

## **Matthew**

750 years later, Jesus got into a boat, and his disciples followed him. A windstorm (seismos in Greek, literally translated a 'quaking', an earthquake) arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was asleep. They woke him: Lord, save us! We are perishing! Jesus said: Why are you afraid, you of little faith (of timid belief)? Then he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a dead calm. The disciples were amazed, saying: What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

As water poured into the boat, they surrender to their fears. They do not yet trust in the heavenly father. The word 'rebuke' is used elsewhere to describe Jesus' rebuking evil spirits during exorcisms, suggesting that demonic activity is behind such sudden violence of the weather.

The mysterious great calm that immediately comes over the sea demonstrates Jesus total authority over the powers that stirred the wind and waters. It reveals that Jesus possesses the power of the creator, who alone can tame the sea.

### **The First Martyrs of Rome**

Yesterday, we celebrated Peter and Paul. Nero accused Christians of having set the fire that burned Rome. While no one believed this, countless Christians were put to death for it. Peter and Paul both died at this time, Peter probably with the first wave of those executions and Paul a year or two later but on the same day.

### **Conclusion/Call to Action**

Amos and Jesus both announcing chastisement, one for a idolatry and a lack of justice (related) and one for giving in to fear and a lack of faith.

Affluence is never a spiritual help. As a human race, We continue the relentless achievement of technological progress and the belief that we have solved our social problems. At the same time, we are abandoning God at an unprecedented rate. Our solution to so called unwanted pregnancy is to kill the unborn, 50 million annually (a familiar number) Our solution to suffering at the end of life is to demand that our healers, our doctors, to assist in killing the elderly. These are the demonic forces over which Jesus has absolute power.

Let us not pretend that the storm is not raging. Let us turn toward Jesus and be amazed at the only one who has power over demonic forces and the forces of nature. The apostles are not wrong to be afraid. We should be like them, acknowledge our fear and call out: We are perishing. Lord, save us. Yes, the Lord will chastise us for our lack of faith. But to know we need a saviour from the storm will be our salvation. Make no mistake. We cannot save ourselves. But he is not asleep. He will save us. He will do it.