

Homily For Tuesday of the 14th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - July 5, 2022

Hosea 8:4-7,11-13 "With silver and gold they made idols: How long will they be incapable of innocence."

Psalms 115:3-10 "Those who make idols are like them, as are all who trust in them."

Matt. 9:32-38 "The Pharisees said: By the ruler of the demons he casts out demons."

How Does He Do It?

Introduction

Years ago, I heard a story about a priest from Quebec who was assigned to come out to the early developing Canadian west. It meant a lot to him that he would be able to communicate the Gospel effectively, so he was working diligently on his English. That was going pretty well. Preparing for a homily on today's passage from Matthew, about Jesus casting out a demon, he carefully wrote down in French, then translated into English, three key questions.

The first question: Qui le diable est-il? Which he translated "Who the devil he is?"

The next question: Que, le diable fait-il? Which he translated "What the devil he does?"

Finally: Comment le diable le fait? Which he translated "How the devil he does it?" I remember this phrase which used to be common when someone did something unusual or impressive, someone might say: How the devil did he do that?

These are still good questions for us to be able to answer today. How can we know the difference between how God is working out his glorious plan of salvation for the world, and how Satan seeks to negate and undermine and eliminate that plan.

Matthew

Jesus is God's plan. After so clearly demonstrating his power to heal and overcome every illness and disability, Jesus reaches the climax of ten miracles

that Matthew reports. This one is different. After making the mute man speak, he demonstrates that his authority is also over the spiritual forces. The people are amazed but most don't really know what to make of it. The Pharisees are trying to figure out what's going on. They reason that, since Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners, he must not be sent from God. In fact, they accuse him of working with Satan. So, there is a kind of logic to their accusation. But it is a logic which is not aided by the light of supernatural reason. God is the God of mercy who calls sinners to return to him.

How does Jesus do it? This is the heart of our faith. Jesus is the Word of God who became one of us. Jesus is the written instruction of God. He is the faithful one, the God who calls people back into covenant relationship. Jesus is the fulfilment of Old Testament promises. He comes from the God who seeks to nourish us like a mother, as we heard from Isaiah on Sunday past. Matthew says he went around proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. We have come to see that he IS that Good News.

We get confused about who God is, what he does, and how he does it. Satan knows these things and is the author only of the world's desperate attempt to get rid of God by having people worship that which is not God. But Jesus is the bringer of peace to the harassed and the helpless it says today. Is there any one of us who, if we are honest, can say we are not harassed or helpless in some way? Jesus IS our peace. That's how he does it.

Psalm

The psalm today is a powerful answer to the question of how Satan operates. The psalmist mocks those who make idols to worship. In those days, idols were wood and stone, silver and gold. Stupid things. Things with neither physical nor spiritual senses. If we worship stupid things, we will become stupid. That's not me saying it. That is God's word.

God calls upon Israel to trust in the Lord. The Hebrew word for trust is Amein. Where you put your trust is what you worship. We don't worship as much things like sun, moon and creatures but money and power and abstract things.

Conclusion/Call to Action

Many good Christians I meet are so sincere and so innocent. They are the truest children of God, with the childlike trust that Jesus says is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. For others of us, we must identify how Satan is operating so we can see where the darkness obscures the truth.

Princess Gloria of Germany is a devout Catholic whose daily life involves being around leaders in the world. She is a prophetic voice today. She says it like this: The prince of this world is very attractive. His goal is to keep people happy so they don't object to anything. This occurs through things like entertainment, technology, power, sex, drugs and many other things. She says we know that the Church proclaims the truth. That is why the world attacks us. The world recognizes the truth and hates it. Death is their sacrament. Death at the vulnerable beginning of life and at the end of life.

Today, brothers and sisters in Christ, let us recognize how the devil does it and then turn and put our trust, our Amen, in the Lord. For our help is in the Lord. Let each of us recognize and root out our idols and destroy them. Let us recognize in the prayer Jesus gave us what St. Cyprian says about the prayer: Hallowed be your name. We pray that God's name may be made holy in us. In doing so, shall we give our Amen with our whole hearts in worship of God? That IS how he will do it in us. Amen.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *All peoples, clap your hands. Cry to God with shouts of joy!*

Collect: *O God, grant that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.*

Hosea: *Thus says the Lord: "They made kings, but not through me. With silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. How long will they be incapable of innocence? An artisan made it. It is not God. When Ephraim multiplied altars to expiate sin, they became to him altars for sinning. Though they offer choice sacrifices, the Lord does not accept them. Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. They shall return to Egypt."*

Psalms: *Our God is in the heavens. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths but do not speak; eyes but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear. They have hands but do not feel; feet but do not walk. They make no sound in their throats. Those who make them are like them. So are all who trust in them. O Israel, trust in the Lord!*

Matthew: *A demoniac who was mute was brought to Jesus. When the demon had been cast out, the man spoke. The crowds were amazed. But the Pharisees said: "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons." Then Jesus went about proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said: "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few."*