

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

### St Peter's 8:30am Mass - July 9, 2024

**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, and all who trust in them, will come to be like them."

**Matthew 9:32-38** "When the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke."

### Free to Speak of God

#### Introduction

Dante is the great 14th century poet who begins his master work, the Divine Comedy, with a tour of hell. He must go down first before he can ascend to the heavenly realm, because he has to become awakened to the true horror of sin, to be 'scared straight'. The sign over the gate to hell reads: "Abandon all hope, you who enter here." As he witnesses the horrible existence of the damned, his guide tells him that this is the place for "those who have lost the good of intellect." The human power of reason, of understanding, which they had at one point, they have become unable to use. They have exchanged it for something false, and so have lost what was true. It terrifies Dante to be there but his guide has to keep reminding him that he is not one of them, because he is still aware of the salvation being offered to him.

#### Matthew

We know that Jesus is God's salvation. His offer to us is not a thing from the world. It is himself. 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. They can't perceive what Jesus is demonstrating. The Pharisees 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 developed in the dark, without spiritual sight and insight, not aided by the light of supernatural reason. It is a kind of idol.

When the demon had been cast out by Jesus, the one who had been mute spoke. The demon keeps the man from being able to speak. But Jesus, the Word of God, went about proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. When he spoke on earth, the good news of the kingdom was proclaimed.

At the sight of the crowd, Jesus had compassion because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. This is the true purpose of sight, to see where are the needs of others. False gods cannot do this.

### **Psalm**

The psalmist mocks those who make idols to worship. In those days, idols were wood and stone, silver and gold. Stupid things, without the good of intellect, of anything that would actually help people. They are things with neither physical nor spiritual senses, useless to save from damnation. If we worship stupid things, we will become stupid. That's just the way it is. In the scientific world in which we live, we don't worship things like sun, moon and creatures but money and power and abstract things. We put our trust in human ideas. The Hebrew word for trust is Amein. As I go through the list, you might think of some of the created gods without power to save us, but only lead us to destruction:

They have mouths but do not speak: Money talks but it tells us nothing about love and compassion. Money as an idol promotes greed and self interest. They have eyes but do not see: We have the expression 'blind rage'. How many today are enraged but acting out at the wrong thing? They have ears, but do not hear: As family values are ignored or shouted down, the voice of God becomes almost impossible to hear. They have hands but do not feel. In the world, we are in a time when we have had taken away from us the value of touch, by which Jesus often healed. They have feet but do not walk. During lockdown, we were forcibly kept in our homes. We can't even care for sick loved ones. But Jesus went to the towns and villages, healing the sick.

Finally, the psalmist repeats a key element of the idols. They make no sound in their throats. But Jesus went to towns and villages proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The psalmist makes two declarations: The ones who make those idols will become like them AND, so will those who trust in them.

## **Hosea**

Hosea warned Israel about turning to idols of silver and gold, leading them to their own destruction. He says they have lost their innocence. How like our time when we expose our own precious children to violence and sexuality, especially during their God made time of innocence.

The prophets are hard to hear today. Hosea was hard to hear by a people who had turned to idols. Things have gotten so complicated that it is hard to know who is a prophet today. I suggest Princess Gloria of Germany. She is a devout Catholic whose daily life involves being around leaders in the world. 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. The good of reason is lost.

## **Call to Conversion**

Why do I choose darkness over light, blindness over sight, muteness over speaking the truth in love, lameness over walking in the truth. There are many who do want to know about the love of God, who see the falseness of the gods seeking control of their lives. But Jesus says there are not enough people to speak the good news of God's love and mercy. That's our job. Don't let the demons of muteness keep us from being bold and speak the truth and love. Today, let us turn and put our trust, our Amen, in the Lord. Let each of us recognize and root out our idols and destroy them. Then let us commit ourselves to present to others the Lord, who is shepherd for those who would see and hear and walk by the light of grace. Let us renew our Amen.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *O God come to my assistance. O Lord make haste to help me. You are my rescuer, my help. O Lord, do not delay.*

**Collect:** *Draw near to your servants, O Lord, and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness that, for those who glory in you as Creator and guide, you may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored.*

**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."*