

Homily For Tuesday of the 16th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass – July 19, 2022

Micah 7:14-20 "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and our transgressions."

Psalm 85:1-7 "Lord, you forgive the iniquity of your people. You pardoned all their sins."

Matt 12:46-50 "Whoever does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother."

Family Conversations

Introduction

Augustine was attracted to higher things, spiritual things, things of the mind. He was also very attracted by lower things, things of the flesh. That aside, his search for truth, he felt, must be particularly beautiful. When he read the best writings of his day, he found himself uplifted. In particular, there was a work by the Roman philosopher Cicero, called Hortensius. That work has been lost, but we know from his writings that Augustine was so moved by it because it lifted his mind to a higher place. Cicero provided him with a concept of Wisdom that made him see that happiness is not in the material but in the spiritual world.

But it wasn't a religion so he kept looking. Except when he read the bible, he found it crude and unsophisticated in comparison. That is until much later when he took Jesus the Messiah into his heart. That was the key which unlocked the infinite beauty and majesty of God.

Even though the Bible is divinely inspired, the various writers of Sacred Scripture are human. So, we get a very human perspective on things. When we are told that God is angry, it's not telling us about the creator's emotional state. It is identifying what has happened in the relationship between God and humanity. God is loving. Part of that love is proper discipline of his children so that they might grow in maturity and in their own ability to practice love and mercy and justice. When the children disobey, they experience consequences. They don't like what happens to them and they express themselves. Younger children tend to see their parents as simply angry when they have been disciplined for misbehaving. They don't see being corrected as being for their benefit until much

later when they look back. In the same way, the petulant children of God also see him as angry, when it is they who have turned from him and disobeyed the commandments, which are there for their good. Sacred Scripture is written by the children who have been disciplined, who have been given a time out or have been sent to their rooms and who eventually seek comfort and solace in the very parents who have been angry with them.

Psalm

The psalmist in today's readings understands that God is justified in punishing his sinful children, and so asks: "O Lord, will you be angry with us forever?" But, because he is also remembering what God has done in the past for his people, the psalmist pleads: "Lord, show us your mercy and love. Once you forgave the iniquity of your people. You pardoned all their sin. You withdrew all your wrath. Now will you do the same for us? Restore us again, O God of our salvation, so that your people may rejoice in you? You have forgiven your people before. Will you do it again for us?"

There is a kind of conversation going on here. It's very natural. It's like the conversations that happen in families or within communities. It is also a conversation in oral culture, where one generation speaks to the next.

Micah

The same conversation is going on in the prophet Micah. There have been warnings of the danger of idolatry and injustices done one to another. There has been loss of protection because they went out from under the protective mantle of the Lord. Now there is a recognition that this loss of harmony is not forever: "Who is like you, the God who removes guilt and pardons sin." You know, the gods of other nations, even today, do not do what our God is known for. He takes this pardoning of sin to a ridiculous extreme. He sends his Son to be that pardon and removal of guilt.

When we study other religions, there are no gods who are merciful and forgiving like this. There is only one God of mercy and forgiveness. He delights in mercy.

Our experience is like the image of God throwing those sins into the sea or trampling them underfoot.

Matthew

Jesus uses every ordinary situation to teach his disciples to become more mature in their relationship with the Father. That's right, it now becomes obvious in our Lord that it is a family relationship, where the perfect image of the Father, Jesus Christ, teaches us to look up from the physical to the spiritual. The presence of his mother and other family members he uses to invite people into a new kind of family, one which seeks to make everyone truly sons and daughters of one God.

In contrast with the Pharisees, those who obey Jesus' words have a relationship with him that is deeper than natural family bonds. Jesus; new family consists of his disciples. This passage in no way undermines the importance of Jesus' mother. She fits every criterion for what it means to be a faithful disciple. She is the first to obey the will of the Father and to believe in his word. Thus she is not only the natural mother of Jesus but also the preeminent member of his family of disciples.

Call To Action

Today, let us seek again to live our family Christian calling. The Catechism says it like this: "Becoming a disciple of Jesus means accepting the invitation to belong to God's family, to live in conformity with His way of life. Let us today again turn to God like Jesus' mother, who fits all the criteria for what it means to be a faithful disciple. She is not only the natural mother of Jesus but also the preeminent member of his family of disciples. Let us be true children of the merciful God of salvation.

- **Key Passages**
- **Entrance Antiphon:** *Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you. Hear the prayers of your people Israel.*
- **Collect:** *Look upon us, O God, creator and ruler of all. Grant that we may serve you with all our heart.*
- **Micah:** *Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. He will again have compassion upon us. He will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob, as you have sworn to our ancestors from of old.*
- **Psalm:** *Lord, you forgave the iniquity of your people. You pardoned all their sins. Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.*
- **Matthew:** *While Jesus was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And, pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother sister and mother."*