

## **Homily For Thursday of the 17th Week of in Ordinary Time- Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass- August 2, 2018**

**Jeremiah 18:1-6** "Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand..."

**Psalms 146:** "Blessed are they whose help is the God of Jacob."

**Matthew 13:47-52** "The kingdom is like a net that ... caught fish of every kind."

#### **Intro**

My wife was, very recently, studying a book on St Peter, by Dr. Tim Gray. She must have had an inkling that St. Peter's was where I would be assigned. We are thrilled and grateful to be serving God in this parish.

I know that weekday mass attendees are sometimes from different parishes but, in effect, you are weekday St. Peter's parishioners. That's how I felt when I would go to mass at St. Francis church downtown near City Hall where I used to work.

Weekday mass attendees are those who seek the closeness with the one who makes us righteous. You are not here for the preaching or the music, as beneficial as those can be (if done well), but for Jesus himself. You need this but so does the whole church need your faithfulness to the Eucharist.

#### **Theme**

Three words/phrases suggest themselves from today's gospel passage: kingdom of heaven, like, righteous.

#### **Point # 1     Kingdom of Heaven**

Everyone wanted to know about the kingdom of heaven. Matthew makes reference more than 30 times. Today this is missing. We have developed so many ways to experience our own self made version of heaven that we know longer even desire it. Or, rather, we know longer recognize that we have a deep longing for the real heaven.

At the Drumheller Passion Play a few years ago, I saw how Jesus might have answered peoples' questions about the K. of H. in an organic conversational way rather than as a prepared text that he had prepared beforehand.

Baltimore Catechism: Our purpose is to know, love and serve God in this life and to be happy with him in the next, which is heaven itself. However, in today's Catechism there is a developed understanding that heaven is really the sharing of God's own Blessed life with us. Not because any need of His, but because of a plan of sheer goodness.

### **Point # 2 "Like"**

In the parables, Jesus is throwing the ideas out to the people so they can catch the one that helps them understand it- to shed light on it. Jesus turns the jewel that is the kingdom around and around, allowing different rays of light to shine on it and through it. If you look at the jewel (the kingdom) from this angle, it's like this. If you look at it from another angle, it's like this.

My professor who was explaining the Blessed Trinity using the same technique. Moments when I could say, I think I've got it. If Jesus had asked me, "Have you understood all this?", I would probably have answered yes with them, but probably without real understanding. Still, the different images help add understanding of the great mysteries of our faith.

The Book of Revelation describes John's direct vision into heaven. He wasn't seeing fake images or holographic projections. He was given a direct insight into the heavenly worship. When he did what he was told and wrote down what he saw, he had the problem of how to describe something that. He had to use the word 'like' quite a few times to attempt to get across what he was seeing.

The kingdom is not a net or fish. That's what his words would be without 'like'. But, there is something about those two objects that gives us some idea of heaven.

### **Point # 3 Righteous**

Righteousness is a theological word, like justification, sanctification, and even salvation. But it is also meaningful on a human level. Throughout the Old Testament, it means holy. This is the essential characteristic of God. It is his holiness which, in the NT causes him to be described as love.

All religious activity was directed at being holy- being like God. When Jesus says you must be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect, he is not saying you have to get 100% on the test. He is saying you must strive after the essential quality of the one who made you in his own image and likeness.

To be righteous, then, means to be like God, which Jesus says we must try to be. The Pharisees (ritual observance), the Scribes (temple worship), the Zealots (political overthrow), and every Jew, were all seeking the same quality.

### **Fulfilment in Jesus**

But heaven is real. Because Jesus is the face of the Father, to receive him is to be experience heaven itself. You aren't experiencing something that is LIKE anything else. You are seeing the manifestation of the kingdom itself. You are receiving that kingdom: body, blood, soul and divinity, into your own being. This is the experience that transforms.

What's the process? Well, in the first reading, the Word of God came to Jeremiah. He was told to explain that God is LIKE a potter who molds clay into whatever he wants it to be, and re-forms it when it gets out of shape. We may be like fish, but what we really are is clay in the potter's hand. We were made good, lost something of that goodness and became wounded. The God of righteousness wants to refashion us into a reflection of himself. Will we let him?

Like the hymn Abba Father says "you are the potter, we are the clay, the work of your hands. Mold us, mould us and fashion us, into the image, of Jesus your son."

Jesus is the one who is casting his net. He uses the apostles initially, but this task becomes one for all of us. Jesus identifies himself with the Father so, if we unite ourselves with Jesus, we become one with the Father. We become righteous. In this way, we experience directly the kingdom of heaven, not something which is simply LIKE the kingdom.

### **Application**

It begins with the desire to be one with Jesus Christ, who offers himself to the father, in the Spirit, for the life of the world. Amen.