

## Homily For Tuesday of the 20th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

### St Peter's 8:30am Mass - August 16, 2022

#### St. Stephen of Hungary

**Ezekiel 28:1-10** "Because you compare your mind with a god, strangers shall defile your splendour."

**Deut 32:26-39** "I thought to blot out their memory, but their enemies might misunderstand."

**Matt 19:23-30** "Everyone who has left family for my sake will inherit eternal life."

#### Who Can Be Saved? Everyone!

##### Introduction

The prefix 'trans' means that something becomes what it was not. The term 'transubstantiation' was used in the Church first in the 11th century, then was dogmatically defined in the 16th century, to describe the mystery of what happens when ordinary bread and wine become Jesus body and blood. The substance has been transformed by the action of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today, that same prefix is used to attempt new definitions that are made up by humans, without regard to God. One of those new definitions I won't talk about today although it needs to be talked about. The other new man made definition is called 'transhumanism'. Transhumanism is the integration of our biological reality with artificial intelligence. Some have already said that we are nearing the end of simply being human. Soon we will become a hybrid being, with computer chips implanted in our brains and manufactured organs to replace worn out biological ones. Some are saying we will end death, making us immortal. Making us immortal ... I am not making this up. This movement to save ourselves from death is nothing but the becoming our own gods, immortal and all powerful.

Today's readings remind us that immortality is not only possible. It is what we have been made for, but by the grace of God, not out of human wealth and capacity.

## **Ezekiel**

Ezekiel receives an oracle against the prince of the city of Tyre. The pride this prince is accused of is the principle sin and the cause of our downfall and distance from God that it has been from the beginning. God's judgment on this ruler is because he considers himself a god, knowing all things and having all things. This pronouncement against them was fulfilled when Alexander the Great besieged the city for seven months before destroying its walls and killing or enslaving 30,000 of its citizens. After Stephen's death a Church established there. 1291 completely destroyed. Jesus calls it an unrepentant city.

Tyre was a famous for wickedness and idolatry. Its prince is an image of the devil. Everything about its self image is fake. The name 'Tyre' signifies a rock but Jesus will declare Peter THE rock of the new Church. Tyre exported the rare purple dye, which is why it was the royal colour. But Jesus is the true source of royalty. God mocks the wisdom of Tyre. You are wiser than Daniel. But they have used wisdom to amass wealth. This is what Solomon eventually did with his wisdom.

## **Psalm**

The psalm today is a song of Moses. It is a judgment on Israel because of their pride. They think their success is because they have done everything by their own hand. It reminds us about the one who has true authority over life and death.

## **Matthew**

Today's gospel passage continues the story of the rich young man who went away grieving after Jesus asked him to give up his possessions to become a disciple. When we grieve, we feel like something has been taken from us and we are overcome with a sadness because we cannot imagine the possibility of our happiness without it. The rich young man is a good person whose possessions have not fully satisfied him. He is searching for the something more that he suspects is out there.

After he leaves, Jesus says that riches make heaven as difficult as the ridiculous image of a camel going through the eye of a needle. It seems as if salvation is an

impossible feat for the rich. Wealth is not inherently evil. However, it tends to diminish dependency on God. It tends to keep the Lord at arm's length.

The disciples are left astonished. We are always going to be astounded at Jesus responses. Who then can be saved? This is the key for all of us, isn't it? Our religion is about being saved. That's why we call Jesus the saviour. There is something in us that knows we need to be saved. Ultimately though what we need to be saved from is our own pride.

They ask: What will we get in return for what we have given up? The answer is that they will get back 100 times what they have given up. One hundred times means that the reward will be of infinite value compared to what we usually think is valuable. What will you get? You will become a new person.

God can enable us to do by grace what we could never achieve by nature. Helped by the Lord's limitless strength, even the wealthiest of persons can access the kingdom. The apostles will share in this kingly rule of the Messiah as founders and leaders of the messianic community we call the Church. The disciples will inherit the very thing that earthly attachments endanger, the blessing of eternal life.

### **Call To Action**

On the one hand, it is the height of arrogance to act as if we know the mind of God. If we can know God by our efforts, then we will soon believe that we are that God. On the other hand, we are humbled to think that the great God of the universe stoops down to teach us the mysteries of his love for us.

St. Teresa of Avila recommends this humble approach: "Beholding His greatness, we are struck by how very far we are from being humble. Our understanding and will become more noble and capable of good in every way when we turn from ourselves to God." If it is true that no one can save himself, it is also true that God desires all people to be saved." For him all things are possible.

Today, let us give all glory to God, for all his gifts. Remember that you have also been raised to new life in him, not by your own wisdom, or effort, or wealth. Lord God, may your will be done in me as it is in heaven.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *Sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.*

**Collect:** *Almighty ever living God, direct our actions that, in the name of your beloved Son, we may abound in good works.*

**Ezekiel:** *To the prince of Tyre: Because your heart is proud and you have said: I am a god ... Yet you are but a mortal, and no god ... By your wisdom and your understanding you have amassed wealth for yourself ... and your heart has become proud in your wealth ... Because you compare your mind with the mind of a god, strangers shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendour. Will you still say: I am a god, in the presence of those who kill you?*

**Canticle (Dt 32):** *The Lord said: I thought to blot out the memory of them from humanity; but I feared provocation by the enemy. for their adversaries might misunderstand. Let them not say: Our hand is triumphant. It was not the Lord who did all this ... There is no understanding in them.*

**Matthew:** *Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. They were greatly astounded and said: Then who can be saved. But Jesus looked at them and said: For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible. Peter said: Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have? Truly I tell you, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones. And everyone who has left (family or land) for my name's sake, will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.*