

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 23rd Week of Ordinary Time - Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - September 6, 2022**

**1 Cor 6:1-11** "But you were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of Jesus Christ and the Spirit."

**Psalm 149:1-9** "The Lord takes delight in his people. Let them sing for joy."

**Luke 6:12-19** "Jesus spent the night in prayer to God, then chose twelve and power came from him."

### **Listen, Then Be Healed**

#### **Introduction**

C.S. Lewis, the man behind the Chronicles of Narnia, had a talent for making Christian life understandable. He was very in tune with what has come to be called The New Evangelization. This is not new teachings, but new methods suited to our time, and a renewed zeal and energy, a renewed passion, for inviting the people of today into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. "In the old days (Lewis says), when there was less education and discussion, perhaps it was possible to get on with a very few simple ideas about God. But it is not so now. Everyone reads, everyone hears things discussed. If you do not listen, you will absorb a lot of wrong ideas about God."

#### **Luke**

Lewis uses that word 'listen'. There is a special kind of listening which you, of course, know as prayer. Introductions like the one in today's gospel passage, could go unnoticed. Luke tells us clearly and intentionally that Jesus choosing the twelve, was preceded by a full night in prayer alone, on a mountain, before God, his Father. The Church that he would build on those disciples was a direct fruit of his prayer.

But that was not the only fruit of his prayer. This was a time of transition in his ministry. He had been travelling around, going to people in towns and villages. Now, crowds would begin to come to him to - FIRST - to listen to him, and THEN to be healed, and then to touch him, to enter into relationship with him, to experience his power in their lives.

Luke does not identify the mountain on which Jesus prayed. But it is clear from the grammar that it was a specific mountain. The most likely possibility is that it was Mt. Tabor, a traditional place of prayer and retreat. Later, he would again be in total communion with the Father, being transfigured into light before Peter, James and John.

When the people listened to him, they were healed of physical infirmities but, even more importantly in my opinion, they were healed of their anxiety. How much is our anxiety and fear a deterrent to faith today. It closes our hearts just as surely as it closed our churches. If we are to be healed of our sinfulness and anxiety, we have to listen. The power to transform hearts and minds comes from this listening, this communing with God.

When Jesus he does this, power comes forth from him, because of that profound unity between Father and Son. One of the wrong ideas about God, the ones C.S. Lewis was referring to, is that we have been given a power to heal ourselves, and that Jesus just came to assure us that we have that power. But it is clear from this passage that the power comes from Jesus himself, in union with the Trinity.

## **Psalm**

I will take a short side trip here. Our first and foundational theological principles is that the reason there is something rather than nothing is that God has made it so. That is an article of faith which is quite simple. The rest of our deliberation might fall under the question of why God made it so. Why did God make everything? Why did God make anything at all? The psalmist declares an answer to this question. God takes delight in his people. God's purpose, we state, is to share his blessed life with us. Since we cannot add anything to God by our existence, we can only receive what God plans for us - divine blessing. When we do this, God's plan is fulfilled. There is unity and harmony with God's plan.

## **1 Corinthians**

St. Paul had built the Corinthian church on the basis of harmony with Jesus Christ, and him crucified for all humankind. This harmony and way of life is sometimes called 'cruciform'. It is lives lived in the shape, or form, of the cross. That is why

Catholics usually have the body of Jesus on the cross. It emphasizes that our salvation comes to us through his death on the cross, and the conquering of that death. This is the great sign and symbol of God's love. Paul built every church on cruciform love. He also had to write letters to those communities as they found ways to undermine and break down that cruciformity.

There is moral chaos in the Corinthian church. Christians were suing each other in the pagan courts. For Paul, this was a triple failure. It was a failure of wisdom. How can you participate in the final judgment of the world if you can't judge trivial cases among your own members, going to non believers in those cases? A community with the wisdom of God should be ashamed of this failure.

Secondly, it was a failure of cruciform love. Later in this same letter, Paul declares that love does not rejoice in wrongdoing or seek its own interest. Cruciform love does not pursue self interest in the courts or anywhere else. It does not inflict injustice, but rather absorbs injustice. It would be better to let yourself be wronged or defrauded than to fail in love.

Finally, it was a failure of conversion. Those who have believed the gospel and been put into right covenantal relationship with God, who have been baptized and set apart for God, cannot continue in their old ways. Fr. Mallon, in his book, *Divine Renovation*, observes that when couples come to have their children baptised they seem to be able, in good conscience, look you in the eye and affirm that they clearly understand what they are undertaking in having their child baptized, while having no intention of coming back the following week.

### **Call To Action**

Our baptism is a high calling and comes with both significant responsibilities as well as grave consequences for those who do not act according to Christ. As with everything in the Christian life, in our thoughts and in our words, in what we do and what we fail to do, all must be centered first on intense and frequent listening to God, and living in harmony with what God reveals to us.

Sometimes people say that their prayer doesn't seem to be doing any good. It's true that this can be the result of our human limitations, our demanding attitude, our impatience and our pride. The way one person put it was this: If you do not pray, for sure what you will get are unprayed for results.

St. Peter Chrysologus says: "Make of your heart an altar and in so doing, united with God, present yourself to the Lord as a sacrifice." Let us again, in this Eucharist, allow ourselves to be united to Jesus, love what he loves, seek to be healed, then share what we have heard with those in the crowd who need us to be that cruciform presence.

### **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *As for me, I shall behold your face. I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.*

**Collect:** *O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, give all who profess as Christians, the grace to reject what is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive what does it honour.*

**1 Corinthians:** *Brothers and sisters, when any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead before the saints? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to decide between one believer and another, but instead you go before unbelievers? In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. None of these will inherit the kingdom of God. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

**Psalm 149:** *Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful. Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him. For the Lord takes delight in his people. Let the faithful exult in glory. Let them sing for joy. Let the high praises of God be in their throats. This is glory for all his faithful ones.*

**Luke:** *Jesus went out to the mountain and spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve, whom he also named apostles. Jesus came down and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from many places. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured, and all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.*

