

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

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - September 10, 2024**

**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."

### **Making the Grade**

#### **Introduction**

They used to say at the university that 'C's get degrees. You have to pass, but not by much. I hated that expression when I was there. It seemed like such a waste of the opportunity and the gift of a university education. The Christian life is different. In the Christian life, a 'C' is not good enough. Only an A+ is enough to enter the Kingdom of God. However, in the life of faith, on our own we cannot get an 'A', no matter how hard we work. We can't even pass. Top marks are given only to those who join themselves to the one who is perfect knowledge itself. This gift is available to everyone through baptism, and a life lived under the influence of its grace. Baptism is like our diploma, our degree. But if we act as stupid people, we trample on that diploma and throw it in the garbage. It becomes useless to us.

#### **1 Corinthians**

Sounding a bit like Jesus himself, Paul twice refers to the kingdom of God and its requirements. He 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. But those churches often found ways to undermine and break down that cruciformity.

In the Corinthian church, Christians were suing each other in the pagan courts. For Paul, this was a triple failure. First, 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. He says it would actually 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.

He reminds them: You were washed by baptism, by the pure gift of adoption and atonement for sins by baptism. But we can lose that justification and even our salvation. We can lose the very inheritance that is ours as adopted sons and daughters. Yet God's mercy overcomes every sin. It is pure gift to us. We cannot earn it, but we do have to live within its laws. No good behaviour earns our place in the kingdom of God. It is free and total gift. The kingdom of God is not a place. It is a person, Jesus Christ. He gives himself freely and totally to us without our earning his free gift of himself. In baptism, we are washed clean of our old ways, so that we can live in Christ. But no one can be in Christ, the kingdom of God, who submits themselves to evil ways. We still have to live that life.

## **Luke**

Of course that saved life has prayer at the heart of it. Jesus choosing of the twelve was preceded by a full night in prayer alone, before God, his Father. Even Jesus had to join his human will to the Father's will before carrying out God's plan of salvation. Only through this profound, long and constant prayer could the Lord receive the necessary strength and light to go on with His mission of abiding by the Father to accomplish His work of salvation for mankind. Probably Jesus prayed

on Mt. Tabor. He was alone there, but later he would be transfigured into light before Peter, James and John.

When he came down from the mountain, he healed all who were in need. Power came out from him, as when the woman touched his garment and was healed. Her faith, but his power. One of the wrong ideas about God 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, who is in communion with the Father and the Spirit.

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, first to listen to him, and THEN to be healed, to touch him, to enter into relationship with him, to experience his power in their lives. He went from the mountain to the plain, from the presence of God to the people. He brought the presence of God to the people.

### **Call To Conversion**

Now, by Baptism and the salvation of Christ, that kingdom has come down from the mountain to live with us. 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. As one saint put it: "If you do not pray, what you will get is unprayed for results."

Let us again commit to being 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. That's an A+ grade.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *Go is in his holy place, who unites those who dwell in his house. He himself gives might and strength to his people.*

**Collect:** *O God, protector of those who hope in you, without whom nothing has firm foundation and nothing is holy, bestow your mercy upon us and grant that we may use the good things that pass in such a way as to hold fast to those that ever endure.*

**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 or defrauded? Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. No fornicator, idolater, adulterer, male prostitute, sodomite, thief, drunkard, reviler or robber will inherit the kingdom of God. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified, all 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. 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.*