

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 25th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - Sept 22, 2020**

**Prov. 21:1-6,10-13** "If you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you will cry and not be heard."

**Psalms 119:1,27-44** "Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the way of the Lord."

**Luke 8:19-21** "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

### **The Heart of a Family**

#### **Introduction**

Summer has officially been over for about an hour now. According to a strict meteorological definition, it is now the fall season. What I like about the definition is that there is a kind of unity in the world because in every place there are exactly the same number of hours of day and night, no matter where you live.

In the next few weeks, the weather might be more like summer, or more like winter, but today is a day where we use a scientific definition to tell us what season it is. Without taking this too far, we can see that there are at least two ways to define the seasons, either by science or by what we experience.

#### **What Is A Family?**

Today's Gospel passage is a reflection on various definitions of family. We can look at it from the culture at the time of Jesus, from the culture of our time and, third, from what Jesus himself says about family.

#### ***1. In Jesus time on earth***

At the time of his walking Palestine, the extended family was the first and only way to define a person. To lose one's family or to be ostracized or kicked out of family life was the same as losing personhood or identity. Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell about this event when the mother and extended family of Jesus came to greet him. That means it is important. They all note that the people around Jesus were emphasizing his identity as closely tied to his direct relatives.

## ***2. In our time***

In our own time, we are seriously struggling with defining our family. There is so much family breakdown and strife that our culture is looking for some way to fill the gaps. The families we grew up in or took on as adults have sometimes been positive and affirming of our human identity, and sometimes not so much. This is our experience. Brokenness is everywhere.

For me, personally, today marks exactly five years since my father passed away. My father was a good man and lived a good long life, but I still miss him every day. I always wish I could have just one more conversation with him, but I suppose it would never be enough. But Jesus is asking me to look beyond even that relationship to a deeper understanding of family.

As a culture, we are redefining marriage and family to fit whatever we want our desires. Family is defined by God. It is not human made, but we want to remake it in our image, which is increasingly disintegrated.

## ***3. What Jesus says, which is for that time and for our time and for all time.***

In this passage, Jesus describes family as those who hear the word of God and do what it says. What they don't fully realize at the time, but we should, is that he IS that word of God. We are called to hear him, and do what he does.

Jesus does not redefine the family relationship. He takes it to the next level. Jesus asks the people of his time on earth to see the natural family as a building block, pointing to the larger family of God.

He also asks the people of our time not to break the family apart and start over again in our own image, but to consider that God is the designer of family for the building up of a kingdom of love, where family members are defined by our relationship with the one who loves without limit and gives himself for his brothers and sisters. Disciples form a new family, which is all inclusive of those who hear and do the word of God. Jesus is the image of family.

### ***Mary's role in family***

Mary has a particular role in this family. She is the mother of Jesus and the one who hears the word of God and does it without reservation. It looks like Mary is being put down, but nothing could be further from the truth. Who was more faithful to Jesus than his mother? She is the one who keeps him close to her heart. She is the most faithful to the word. She was at the foot of the cross, keeping the word in her heart and acting on it.

### **Call To Action**

We have already been made brothers and sisters to Jesus through our Baptism. Today, Jesus asks us to hear the word of God and do it, to be what the family we have been made for - to be mother and brother and sister to the Lord of life and to all who are called to be his disciples. It is a simple task for us today. Listen to him and him alone and ask God for the grace to do what he tells us. In this is our duty and our joy.

## **Key Passages**

**Proverbs:** *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord. All deeds are right in the sight of the doer, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice ... If you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you will cry out and not be heard.*

**Psalms:** *Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord ... Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.*

**Luke:** *Jesus was told: Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you. But Jesus said to them: My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.*