

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

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Sept. 25, 2018**

**Proverbs 21:1-6,10-13** "Righteousness & justice are more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."

**Psalms 119** "Give me understanding, that I may ... observe your law with my whole heart."

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

#### **Intro**

This Gospel passage, in a way, allows us to reflect on almost anything we want in the spiritual pilgrimage that is our lives. We can ask the questions:

- what is the nature of our relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Are we a true 'mother' or 'brother' to Jesus?
- Are we 'standing outside' waiting to see Jesus?

#### **Theme**

Years ago, there was a major museum display, in Edmonton, of artifacts and documents and statues related to images of Jesus, from archeological finds and paintings and writings and artwork from down through the ages since Jesus walked the earth. They had called the display simply 'Jesus'. My wife and I went to see it and, as we drove, our conversation got a lot of mileage out of the idea that we were going to Edmonton to 'see Jesus'. We asked the question of ourselves that people sometimes ask about his return. Where would he go when he comes back? And if he did, would we say like Nathaniel did before he became a disciple, when Philip told him that he had found "him about whom the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth". And Nathaniel responded: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" And we would probably echo Nathaniel "Can anything good come out of Edmonton?"

I believe that it wasn't intended as a religious display, nor was it intended to increase the faith of the people who went to see it. It's much like when Life Magazine, or MacLean's, or National Geographic, do a story on a topic related to

Christian- Jewish heritage. It is based on curiosity about the scientific basis for the claims of Christianity. It's not intended to increase faith. But that, of course, is always Jesus' concern.

## **Application**

This passage provides us with the image of Jesus' mother and his brothers waiting outside to see him. And, when Jesus is told, he does what he always does. He takes the reality that is before him and remakes it into something that it was not before. And then he tries to lift their minds up to see the new picture he is painting for them.

Is Jesus putting down the idea of mothers and brothers? Is he putting down his own mother and brothers? Hardly, in either case. He is doing what the Jewish proverbs from "the Word of God" can lead us to do. The proverbs are a way to prepare ourselves to be ready to go inside, to be mother and brother to Jesus. They are not just good actions. They are ways of being which prepare the soil of our hearts. They are ways to do as the psalmist says: "I have chosen the way of faithfulness." Now the way of faithfulness is a path. It is a way of going from outside to inside. And the destination is Jesus.

Mary is Jesus' mother. Does she hear the word of God and do it? Not only DOES she, but she is our ultimate exemplar, the disciple par excellence. She is the one who says the biggest 'YES' to God in all of history. She is the one who is willing to receive the sword that will pierce her own soul.

When we went to Rome for the first time, our wonderful guide took us into the entrance to St. Peter's Basilica. He carefully took our attention to the left of the entrance, then to the centre, then, almost in a whisper, said, and behind you, to the right, is Michelangelo's Pieta. And so we turned towards the statue of that incredibly beautiful and powerful marble image of Mary holding her son's dead body across her own- the entire weight of the son carried on the body of the mother, who also once carried him in her womb.

I was so caught off guard by the incredible power and beauty of this image that I stopped breathing for a moment. Then I noticed that the same thing had

happened to others and that half of the group had spontaneous tears, which I did also. We were overwhelmed with the image of the mother's love for the son, the woman who had truly heard God's word and had carried it in her being.

### **Call To Action**

The same question is just as relevant for us as it was then. Who are Jesus' mother and brothers who hear the Word of God and do it? Will that be us? For example, what will we be willing to do to carry the Church, the Body of Christ, during this time of unbelievable pain and suffering that the Church is undergoing?

We have already been made brothers and sisters to Jesus through our Baptism. Aided by the grace of that sacrament, we are invited to end our waiting outside, to come in and be close to Jesus, to hear the word of God and do it, to be what we have been made to be- mother and brother and sister to the Lord of life.