

Homily For Tuesday of the 27th Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1

St Peter's 8:30 AM & 7:00 PM Mass - October 5, 2021

Jonah 3: 1-10 "The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time."

Psalms 130: 1-8 "Out of the depths of my heart, I cry to you, O Lord."

Luke 10: 38-42 "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by so many things."

Chastised Yet Loved

Introduction

In a parenting class, a woman asked the presenter if she could explain how to pass along her values to her children. The presenter, very wisely I think, said: Not only **can** you teach your children your values, you **will** teach them your values. By everything you say and do, you will teach them.

Very early, children become intensely aware of what's fair and what's not fair. I am guessing that, as parents, we somehow teach them this concept by how we behave. All I know is that, when it came to dessert, my four brothers and I knew exactly what each other had received, and we were always certain we had not gotten our share.

Today, among many other things we can learn about God and about ourselves, we get a lesson in how God chastises and corrects us when we have a bad attitude about being treated unfairly. Today's passage from the prophet Jonah begins with: "The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time." Today's Gospel passage makes special note that Jesus uses Martha's name twice. Both are signs of God's chastisement, but also of God's love and mercy for those who are stuck on a negative path.

Jonah

God sent Jonah right into the middle of the capital city of Assyria, Israel's enemy, and shout the need for repentance from evil, in order to avoid destruction. Yesterday's passage from Jonah was about his rejection of this same call from God. God asked him to go east. He went west. God asked him to go overland to

Nineveh in Assyria. He went to the Mediterranean Sea and got on a boat. Tomorrow, we will again hear of Jonah's jealousy and his rejection of God's mercy given freely to the enemies of Israel.

But today we don't get any of Jonah's petulant attitude. Only that God called him a second time to go and preach mercy. What's Jonah to do? Earlier, he had tried to implement what, in psychology today would be called, the 'geographical cure': If you aren't happy with something about your life, go somewhere else and it will be better. But, it rarely is better, because whatever disposition of our hearts is the problem will come with us wherever we go. So, Jonah goes where God tells him to go, and do what God tells him to do.

There must have been some kind of openness in Nineveh. Sometimes a people are ready to change and sometimes they are of a rebellious heart. But, God is merciful, even to enemies. This foreshadows Jesus' teaching that we should love our enemies. However, all people will end up being God's people. That is the theme of the story of salvation. No one is outside the mercy of God unless they choose it.

Luke

Martha and Mary have both chosen commendable behaviours. Neither is wrong or bad. Neither are condemned by Jesus. At this particular moment, in the presence of Jesus, one has the heart of service and the other has a listening heart.

The darkness creeps in when Martha complains about the unfairness. Whenever Jesus is giving a gentle rebuke to someone he loves, he uses their name more than once. Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me. Peter, Peter, do you love me?

Sooner or later, we are likely to feel uncared about, maybe especially during this time. I think many are saying in their homes and in their hearts: "Lord, do you not care about me?" And Jesus will say to us, "You are worried about many things, but only listen to me and you will find rest for your souls."

In the Church, Mary and Martha share a common ministry. They are both models for women and men, of a partnership in service to the reign of God. In this

service, the love and mercy of God should be the source and the end goal for us. The gentle correction that Jesus offers Martha is a reminder to her that work is nothing without its connection to God. For this reason Martha needs Mary as much as Mary needs Martha.

Psalm

The psalmist does not always have the right attitude, but today he has the correct attitude. God sees the darkness in our lives, but does not reject us. If we see by the light of his grace, we know that none of us will see salvation without His mercy. If he laid bare our guilt, who could endure it?

Call to Action

Today's passages are not about whether Martha and Jonah change their attitudes. That will come in other passages. Today, it's about the invitation to draw close to the God of love and mercy. Probably he has spoken into our hearts about this many more times than twice. God continues to call us by our name.

Today, it is the king of a wicked people and the enemy of Israel who teaches us how to respond to God. Today it is Mary, who has neglected the duties associated with hospitality who is held up as having chosen "the better part," listening to Jesus. It doesn't mean that Jonah is absolutely wrong, or that Martha is doing something evil. It means only that, no matter where we are on our path, no matter what has happened to us, or how we have been treated, or what seems fair or unfair.

Listen to God call you to hear his word of mercy

Listen to Jesus say your name twice ...

Only if we listen will we know how to act: free from jealousy, free to hear God call our names, free to love like God loves.

Key Scripture Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *To you I call, for you will surely heed me, O God.*

Collect: *Almighty ever living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours.*

Jonah: *The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying: "Get up, go to Nineveh and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out. Jonah went into the city and cried out: "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people believed God. They proclaimed a fast. The king covered himself with sackcloth and ashes. By decree of the king and his nobles, no human being or animal shall feed nor shall they drink water. They shall be covered in sackcloth and shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from violence. Who knows? God may relent so that we do not perish. When God saw how they turned from their evil ways, he changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them and did not do it.*

Psalm: *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Hear my voice. If you should mark our iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. With him is great power to redeem.*

Luke: *Jesus entered a certain village, where Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks and asked: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."*