

Homily For Friday of the 27th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - Oct. 7, 2022

Gal 3:6-14 "In Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham came to the Gentiles ... through faith. "

Psalm 111:1-6 "The Lord will remember his covenant forever."

Luke 11:15-26 "If by the finger of God I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

Casting Out Demons

Introduction

There is perhaps nothing so uniquely Catholic, besides the Eucharist and the other sacraments, as our devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus. We have so many Marian feasts. Today we honour Mary in the Rosary.

Our Lady of the Rosary

The Catholic Church designates October as the Month of the Holy Rosary. During this month the faithful venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary especially under her title of Our Lady of the Rosary. The specific feast called Our Lady of the Rosary was originally called Our Lady of Victory. It was instituted following the Christian victory over the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571. Pope St. Pius V attributed the naval victory of the Catholic forces, who were greatly outnumbered, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There was a campaign asking the faithful across Europe to pray the rosary for the triumph of the Church. The unlikely victory was miraculous. The winds changed at a key moment, and the invading Turkish Muslim fleet was turned away from a likely victory over Christian Europe.

But Mary never takes credit for such victories. She just transmits in a most beautiful and most translucent way, the grace of God. God has made us not only partakers of grace for ourselves, but also means to transmit that same grace to others. The one who does this is the one who is most docile before God, the most humble before God, the least encumbered by sin, which separates us from God.

She makes possible what God wants for all of us, what the angels have. They see the face of God. Her victory is our victory in Christ, her Son.

Luke

The Gospels this week go through that son's teaching on prayer through the Our Father. When they ask, "Lord, teach us to pray, the first thing Jesus teaches is to turn to God as Father. We wouldn't have the boldness to do that if it wasn't for Jesus. The point is that it is a relationship. God is not an abstract concept. Jesus wants to put us in relationship to HIS Father. So when we pray for the kingdom to come, it is an invitation to enter into a relationship with that kingdom.

Jesus brings everything back to that kingdom, including casting out a demon. In the Our Father, we pray for God's kingdom to come. Out of jealousy or intentional ignorance or just blind hatred, many say he is casting out demons by the power of the leader of the demons. To those open to faith, it is an obvious contradiction. So Jesus issues a warning. A demon sent into a wasteland wants a place to go and says I will go back. It is a parody on the Prodigal Son who realizes his need for his father.

It is hard to imagine a more holy deed than expelling the devil's influence from someone's soul. It seems unbelievable to think that anyone would accuse him doing so precisely by the power of that very devil. That is what happens to the best of our rational thinking capacity when someone is blind to God's presence, and jealous of it. Don't we see that maybe especially today, when Christ and his Church are accused of all manner of hatred. They call it phobias. Those who are consumed by an ideology of bigotry and hatred accuse others of being full of bigotry and hatred.

Pope Benedict XVI says that "The Evil One always seeks to spoil God's work, sowing division in the human heart, between body and soul, between the individual and God, in interpersonal, social and international relations. The Evil One sows discord; God creates peace." The Catechism has a helpful point. In paragraph 395, it reminds us that "The power of Satan is not infinite. He is only a creature, powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature. He

cannot prevent the building up of God's reign." Without this confidence, we are vulnerable. Jesus issues a warning. A demon cast out is in a wilderness. It goes back to where it was cast out. Finding the place cleaned out, it goes and gets seven friends. It's not enough to kick out a demonic influence. It's not enough to avoid evil. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to be filled with grace to prevent further possession. There is no place for evil if we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We need daily bread from God. We need a deepening conversion to Christ. We need transformation.

Galatians

The key transformative moment for Paul was when he met Jesus face to face. When the ultimate son of righteousness appeared to him, he immediately stopped being distracted by what was of lesser importance, adherence to legal details. He frames it in terms of curses and blessings. Cursed means to be separated from God. Those who rely on the minute details of the law have to do it perfectly, which is impossible. Therefore they are cursed. But those who turn to Christ for salvation are blessed. Paul makes it clear that this blessing was intended right from the beginning. Abraham's trust in God's plan and God's promises was a pointing forward to faith in Christ.

Call To Action

Saint Pope John Paul II proposed a new set of mysteries that many are now familiar with: the Mysteries of Light, the Luminous Mysteries. These scenes from the Gospels fill in the gap between Christ's childhood and His Passion with events from His public ministry. This is the light that Mary brought into the world by her trust in God. That is the light of Christ, the light to the nations, the light that Jesus cast out in one person, the same light he will pour into our souls if we have the childlike faith of Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary.

Key Scripture Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.*

Collect: *Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we may through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by his passion and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection.*

Galatians: *Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. The scripture declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." for this reason those who believe are blessed, with Abraham who believed. For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all things written in the book of the law." But the one who is righteous will live by faith. But the law does not rest on faith. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." In order that it Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Psalm: *The Lord will remember his covenant forever. Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright. His righteousness endures forever. The Lord is gracious and merciful.*

Luke: *Some of the people said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." Others, to test him, kept demanding from him a sign from heaven. But he knew what they were thinking. "Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. Whoever is not with me is against me. When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place but, not finding any, it says, I will return to my house from which I came. When it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.*