

Homily For Tuesday of the 28th Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1

St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - October 17, 2023

(Memorial of St. Ignatius of Antioch)

Romans 1:16-25 "Claiming wisdom, they became fools, exchanging the glory of God for images."

Psalm 19:1-4 "The heavens proclaim the glory of God."

Luke 11:37-41 "You clean the outside of the cup but inside are full of greed and wickedness."

The Dirty Cup

Introduction

It took maybe three days in Israel to realize that our attempts over the years to impose a peace on the Middle East came from ignorance of the very complex situation there, and a kind of arrogance that we could parachute in a peace solution. There aren't just two warring sides. Amongst Israelis there are many factions opposed to each other. The same is even more true amongst the Arab nations. As soon as there are groups on both sides moving towards peace, there are others which will sabotage that peace.

Israel has a right to defend itself. Palestinians have a right to basic needs and human dignity. Human wisdom cannot solve this. Today we pray for God's peace because the human capacity for peace is so limited. We have just heard that the same bishop who asked the world to pray for Israel has offered himself as an exchange for the hostages. Now that is truly in the spirit of St. Ignatius, whom we honour today.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius is very important because he was ordained Bishop of Antioch by St. Peter himself, and was a disciple of the Apostle John. When Ignatius violated the imperial edict to worship false gods, he was arrested and led before Emperor Trajan. After boldly proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ, he was condemned to be devoured by wild beasts for public sport in the Roman Coliseum. On his journey from Syria to Rome he wrote letters to his fellow Christians, encouraging them with his apostolic zeal and exhorting them to obey their bishops. He also pleaded

that none try to obtain his release, as he was eager to lay down his life for Jesus, saying, "The only thing I ask of you is to allow me to offer the libation of my blood to God. I am the wheat of the Lord; may I be ground by the teeth of the beasts to become the immaculate bread of Christ." He was devoured by lions in Rome. St. Ignatius of Antioch is the first to have used the term "Catholic" Church."

Like Paul, he was totally free of the attachments of this world. He could let go, not just of the things we get so easily attached to, but his own life. He wasn't throwing it away. He was offering it as a sacrifice to God. "Do not talk about Jesus Christ as long as you love this world. My love of this life has been crucified and there is no yearning in me for any earthly thing. I am no longer willing to live a merely human life."

Romans

Only a few years before St. Ignatius, St. Paul addressed a small and vulnerable Christian community. Like our culture today, pagan hedonism was driving culture into a spiral of deeper and deeper sin. In that context, he said: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." You and I know that we are looked down on for being religious. Paul pleads with us again not to be ashamed. Believing in Christ is the hope of the world. It is the Gospel which saves us from our sins. His death and resurrection, is proof of his divinity and his glory. The world that seeks to suppress the truth is giving in to wickedness. The modern atheist sees nature, its intricacy and beauty and order but does not see God. We are in a dangerous time when many in our culture have turned away from justice towards God.

St. Paul says that if we don't give our minds to God in proper and total worship i.e. being just towards God, then our thinking will become futile and our capacity to know the truth about God will be darkened. That's the ultimate fake news. Lack of piety and the truth about God leads to wickedness. God hands them over to their lust and impurity. Once we lose the truth about God, we lose the truth about humanity and proper behaviour. That's the real source of wickedness.

Luke

This is exactly the issue that Jesus takes up with Pharisees and others time and time again. His image of a dirty cup is a prime example of his clarity on this. In every single Gospel passage we might study, Jesus always sees whether justice towards God is guiding peoples' behaviour towards others. Jesus always sees the inside of the cup. He looks directly at the inside of our heart in every single Gospel passage. The God who made the inside of the cup sees what we have done with the inside of our own hearts and minds.

Poor Pharisees. They really do want to be holy. Yet they constantly fall under condemnation by Jesus for their foolishness because they think that created behaviours will take the place of conversion of heart to God. Jesus does not condemn the washing of hands, but rather the perception that it makes you holy on the inside when to do that.

Jesus does not condemn their outward holiness, but only that they don't let it penetrate to the heart: "You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"

Call to Conversion

The psalmist declares that "The heavens are telling the glory of God." God created everything, and he saw that it was good. In that creation could be seen finite reflections of the infinite glory of God. From Romans: Man (humanity) cast his eyes down from heaven and worshipped those created things, making himself the measure of all things, forgetting to give thanks to the one who made them. And his mind and heart became darkened. From the Gospel of Luke: Jesus shed light on the hearts of all humankind, making us aware of our hypocrisies, our fake worship. He gave us himself as the perfect sign of true worship and justice.

We are overwhelmed by the forces of evil, but we are not conquered. We have peace. We have Christ. Let him be proclaimed in Israel and Palestine, and in our hearts.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord speaks of peace to his people.*

Collect: *Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord.*

Romans: *I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. As it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith." The wrath of God is revealed against those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse for, though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him. Their senseless minds were darkened. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.*

Psalm: *The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*

Luke: *A Pharisee invited Jesus to dine. He was amazed to see that Jesus did not first wash before dinner. The Lord said to him, "You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? So give for alms those things that are within and everything will be clean for you."*