

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 29th Week of Ordinary Time- Year 1**

### **St Peter's 8:30 AM & 7:00 PM Mass - October 22, 2019**

**Romans 5:12-21** "where sin increased, grace abounded more, leading to eternal life in Jesus Christ."

**Psalms 40** "I have not hidden your saving help within my heart. I have spoken of your salvation."

**Luke 12:35-38** "Blessed are those whom the master finds alert. He will come and serve them."

### **Grace Abounds All The More**

#### **Introduction**

From time to time, I meet those who were among almost a million people at Downsview Airport in Toronto, in 2002, when Pope John Paul II celebrated the World Youth Day closing mass. All of us who were there remember how the rain stopped just as his helicopter landed and, just as he spoke the first words of the mass, the sun came out.

#### **St. Pope John Paul II**

Because Pope Francis has made such an impact in the social media age, people forget that Pope St. John Paul II was the original 'people's pope'. No one in history has addressed more people in audiences. He is the one at whom the young people would shout out: "We love you John Paul." And he would shout back: "John Paul loves you too."

Of the many things that could be said about St. John Paul the Great, what I remember most is how he lived out the Lord's conversation with St. Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

As he got visibly weaker and weaker with Parkinson's Disease, many were uncomfortable watching the Pope struggle to speak. Some tried to say, without sounding like they wanted to get rid of him, that it would be appropriate for him to step down if he was physically unable to guide the Church, and it would be permissible for him to retire and guard his health.

But, as faith in the crucified Christ came to mean more and more in my own life around that time, I thought it was one of the most beautiful things I have ever witnessed, to see John Paul humbly proclaiming Christ IN his weakness. Like St. Paul in prison, beaten and stoned, and like Jesus himself, tortured and crucified, it was when John Paul was at his weakest that God used him most powerfully to proclaim Christ crucified to a world damaged by sin.

## **Romans**

Another comparison between St. John Paul II and St. Paul is that their writing is often packed very tightly with meaning. Typically it requires a lot of thought to plumb the depths of its richness. Because the letter to the Romans is considered the most important of the New Testament letters, we need to sort out some of the ways it draws us into the mystery of God's love for us.

There is a tremendous energy in his writing. It's almost as if he can't write fast enough to keep up with his profound understanding of just how radical a thing it is that God became man in Jesus Christ. Here are some of the key points for how Paul connects the dots of salvation history.

1. Adam and Eve began in intimate relationship with God. There was nothing to separate humanity from God. There was no shame to endure.
2. But Adam sinned, opening the door for sin to enter into the world and into everyone who would come after him.
3. Sin spread to all. We know this, because we can see that all have sinned. Even the holiest are not exempt from its effects. It was as if our spiritual DNA had been corrupted and that DNA sin gene switch was always ready to be flipped on.
3. Physical death also came into the world because that is how sin, which is spiritual death, looks in the physical world.
4. Adam and Jesus are related in a very important way. Paul calls Adam "a type of the one who was to come." Throughout all of Sacred Scripture, this means that Jesus would perfect the failings of those who went before. He would have the

same human nature, but he would heal that human nature because of his own perfection.

5. Adam's disobedience led to our condemnation and death because of sin, but one man, Jesus Christ, was so perfectly obedient, that all who truly desire communion with God are made righteous - that means in intimate harmony with God.

6. Finally, everywhere we sin increasing, the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, increases even more, leading to eternal life through that same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

### **Psalm**

Before Jesus came into our human history and our human nature, there were many hints of his coming. Today's psalmist could imagine this grace. He knows that his own animal sacrifices won't be enough and that God doesn't really need those sacrifices. Only the sacrifice of the sinner's heart will bring him or her into right relationship with God. So he says, "Here I am, O my God. Your law is within my heart. I have not hidden your saving help within my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation."

### **Luke**

We know that the psalmist has it right because that's exactly what Jesus says to his audience, "Be ready. Be dressed for action." The person who is ready will not be attached to the things of this world, including his own pride. Instead, if we are ready to receive our master, he will bless us in unimaginable ways. He will sit down with us and serve us." Again today, we will experience this as he serves us with his own life giving body, blood, soul and divinity.

### **Call to Action**

Today, as we contemplate the consequences of yesterday's federal election, we need the grace of God as much as ever. We remain in desperate need of salvation. All authority comes from God. Let us strive to find ways to submit to his authority and so allow our sinful hearts to be transformed by grace.