

Homily For Tuesday of the 29th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Oct. 23, 2018

Eph 2:12-22 "In Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Psalm 85 "The Lord speaks of peace to his people."

Luke 12:35-38 "Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes."

Intro

This is not a comfortable gospel message for a procrastinator. That person lives life waiting for the rush of adrenalin needed to complete assignments and get ready for events. I'm not saying who that might be but, just for argument sake, I will say it's me. In that case, I have to pay particular attention to find out if my propensity for waiting will cost me something important. In the material world, I can usually manage my tendency well enough. I can coach myself: don't be a fool, don't embarrass yourself, be ready early in case some unexpected delay happens at the last minute. In the matter of the spiritual journey that we are all on, leaving things until later has much more potential to be disastrous. The problem is that, when we establish patterns of not being attentive, of saying I will get to it later, we become that person and can't suddenly change when the need arises.

Theme

It is not uncommon for us to hear Jesus say that we have to be ready. Our opportunity to be present to God is right now, not tomorrow. Yesterday's warning was about the man in the parable who filled his barns, then settled in to "relax, eat, drink, and be merry." And what happened? He died, lost everything he thought was valuable and, if today's reading carries on the lesson, that train 'bound for glory' left the station without him.

It might have been enough for Jesus to say to his disciples, then and now, that we can't live life according to the way of the world and expect to suddenly, when the time comes, be ready to live a transcendent life, ready for the kingdom of heaven. But Jesus uses the image of a master, or householder, gone to a wedding. We might ask who is the master? One commentary suggests that he is the

bridegroom of the wedding and he is coming home with his bride. Or, is it simply a matter that it is expected that the household slave or servant always opens the door? And, it seems, he or she would be required to be properly dressed for that role and have a light already lit so that the master would not be in the dark.

There is a spoiler alert here. In Luke's 'readiness' stories, the master, we find out in tomorrow's gospel passage, is the Son of Man himself. This makes even the procrastinator sit up and take a little notice. The slaves are waiting for Jesus himself.

The catechism relates vigilance and watchfulness to the petition in the Our Father "lead us not into temptation". It points out that Jesus defeated the temptation in the wilderness, at the beginning of his ministry, through prayer. Jesus, not just as our saviour, but as our model, demonstrates that prayer is communion with the Father, which is resistance to temptation, to anything which is NOT of the Father. As much as sleep is needed in the material world, to be spiritually asleep is to be vulnerable to temptation. "The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch."(CCC2848) The master's delay must not be used as an excuse for inadequate or inappropriate action. The judgment will be particularly hard on those who know their obligations, but failed to carry them out."

Clearly, it is the door to our hearts that we must be ready to open. And, it is not because the master is incapable or arrogant about demanding his slaves take care of every whim. It's because Jesus is only the Lord and master of our lives if we let him be so. He does not force himself on us. It is like the passage from Revelation: Behold I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me." (3:20) This message was specifically for the church at the Asia Minor city of Laodicea. And what was the problem with the people in that church? They were neither hot nor cold in their faith. They were lukewarm. If someone is on fire for their faith, they will do everything they can to welcome the saviour. If they are cold to him, at least there is a passion which can be turned towards God, like what happened to St. Paul. But for the one who doesn't really care either way, they can't be roused. They are asleep.

Call To Action

We will soon come to the season of 'being ready'. Anything we think of that has value, especially relationships, should be done when the opportunity arises. Because we don't know when the opportunities to build relationships, to show love and caring, will happen, we have to build an attitude of readiness. But, if we are ready, something astounding happens. This is where Jesus turns our understanding of the world upside down. The one who was the master becomes the slave. We will eat together, and he will serve us.

The risks of being asleep are great. But much greater still is the reward of being in communion with the master, our Lord, of which today's communion is both the reality and a foretaste, if we are ready to receive him. As Paul tells the Ephesians, "Now, in Christ Jesus, we who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."