

## Homily For Tuesday of the 2nd Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

### St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - Jan 21, 2020

**1 Sam 16:1-13** "The spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward."

**Psalm 89:19-27** "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation."

**Mark 2:23-28** "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

### Appearances and Realities

#### Intro

Observance of the Lord's Day is important to Catholic Christians. It is the primary way we obey the 3rd commandment, to keep holy the Sabbath. The Sabbath has become for us the Lord's day, the day of the resurrection, the day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

The question of appearances is as important today as it has ever been. With virtual reality in the digital age, people can have experiences without the actual reality. That's what some drugs can do. That's what certain online and gaming experiences can do.

In today's gospel passage, the question is whether the outward appearance of observing the Sabbath is adequate, or whether something more, something deeper, is required.

#### The Anointing of David

The anointing of the greatest king of Israel is instructive for us as to how we should seek true reality rather than what only appears of value.

Saul was chosen the first king of Israel. The people wanted a king to make them like other nations, so God gave them what they wanted. He was strong and tall and gave them the appearance of strength even while his heart began to turn away from God.

So God says to Samuel, ***I will now choose*** your king as one who will be with me in his heart. Mortals look on outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

And so, in a deeply sacramental kind of moment, Samuel poured the oil over David, anointing him to be set aside, to be consecrated to serve God with his whole heart, not just with appearances. As the psalmist says today: He shall cry to me, "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!" I will make him the highest of the kings of the earth." And so the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.

### **Jesus and the Sabbath**

Jesus was dealing with the same issue in a grain field on the Sabbath. He was feeding his disciples on the Sabbath as David had done, acting by the spirit of God in him, when his soldiers were hungry. David, taking on the authority of the Old Testament priesthood, pointed the way forward to the New Testament priesthood, inaugurated by Jesus himself, who is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Jesus now feeds those who trust in him. Beginning with grain from the fields, he transforms that grain into his own body, by which he offers to feed all who will come to the table of his body and blood in truth and honesty and integrity. On the Lord's Day, our Sabbath, along with the whole community, we eat the true bread from heaven. He gives us, not appearances, but himself.

### **St. Agnes**

Today, as we look to our king and our God, we honour St. Agnes because of her heart for God. Sometimes I think it is very sad when I read of martyrs who were killed for the faith just before the formal period of persecution ended in the Roman Empire. Perhaps within a couple of years, her faith would have been acceptable throughout the Roman Empire and she wouldn't have been sacrificed.

The problem with my concern is the same problem Jesus faced with the Pharisees. I keep getting caught up in what is important to the world of the senses, and human ideas of what matters. The reason Agnes is such a wonderful saint and a wonderful symbol for us today is that she held nothing back of what the world thinks is wonderful. Even her youth and beauty and purity she gave back to God as a holy offering. Because of her purification before God, she now

experiences the holiness of life that knows no limits in its rewards for those who seek God with their whole hearts.

## **Conclusion**

We are continually bombarded with the ideas of the culture and of the world, that worldly happiness is the highest peak of experience. This idea is as false as can be. No experience in the world of space and time can hold a candle to the unimaginable beauty and brilliance of life in God. Nothing which ***appears*** desirable to the senses can match the ***reality*** of what God has in mind for those who love him.

The prayer attributed to St. Agnes tells us about the reality of what God would have seen in her heart beneath the appearances of her beauty: "Christ made my soul beautiful with the jewels of grace and virtue. I belong to him whom the angels serve." And so our opening prayer today invites us to seek what she sought: "Grant that we may follow her constancy in the faith."

Holiness is the key, not outward observance of the law and its commandments. That is the difference between reality and appearances. Of course we should obey the commandments. Of course we should honour the Lord's Day. The Pharisees were not wrong about that. But they did not understand true holiness of heart.

Agnes was holy because she gave everything back to God, including her greatest gifts by human standards. David was holy because of his obedience to the spirit acting in him. Both of these kinds of holiness look to Jesus, who is the reason we honour the Sabbath.