

Homily For Tuesday of the 30th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - Oct. 25, 2022

Eph 5: 21-33 "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Psalm 128:1-5 "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine and your children like olive shoots."

Luke 13:18-21 "Like a mustard seed planted, the kingdom grew into a tree, with branches for the birds."

Sacrificial Love

Luke

Jesus constantly gives insight into heaven, into the Father himself, into the Spirit which gives life. Why does he use the images he does to describe the kingdom. What about a cat, a soldier, a cloud in the sky, an old man, a good meal? Probably he could make anything in the created order into an image of heaven. I think that's the point. Everything in creation speaks of the glory of God and his kingdom.

Yes, it's like a mustard seed. Yes, it is like yeast mixed in with flour. Yes, it is like a found coin. Yes, it's like a pearl found in a field. It's all those things and more. The point is that we can see glimpses of the kingdom of heaven everywhere we look. In every nature scene and in every relationship, there are signposts pointing "this way" to understanding the kingdom.

In these two images of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus says it is like a mustard seed which grows into a tree, and it is like leaven which is mixed with flour. The Kingdom of God cannot come to those who do not want it, or who do not ask for it and seek it. The birds making nests are those who are looking for a home in the kingdom for which we were created. Ultimately, it is like nothing we can imagine but everything we can long for, and it is reflected everywhere we look.

Psalm

Even just the psalm tells us how to experience the kingdom and have a truly happy life. Fear the Lord. Be in amazement that the God of the universe has made us for the sole purpose of sharing his blessed life with us.

Ephesians

I don't know if you have noticed, but our culture has stopped asking about the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, when they hear that Paul tells wives to be subject to their husbands, they love to say that Christians believe in making women inferior. They don't read how today's passage from Ephesians starts with husbands and wives being subject to one another, and that 80% of the passage is about the ways that a husband must love his wife: as much as his own body, as much as Christ loved the Church, sacrificing himself, holding nothing back. This is also an image of the kingdom of God, in imitation of Jesus, who made the kingdom real in his own body, and wants to do so again and again in his body, the Church.

Many in the past have read this superficially. Paul says be mutually submissive. Remember the creation account. Eve was not taken from foot or head but next to his heart. Husbands are to imitate Jesus, to sacrifice himself. People make a mistake about the Church and about this passage because they don't read the whole context of Ephesians.

What does Christ do for those who subject themselves to him? He handed himself over and sacrificed himself for us. Since he did that, showing us the way of love as sacrifice, then we ought die to our selfishness and give ourselves to others, especially to our spouses. This is the way of Christians.

John Chrysostom, in the 4th century, challenges the husbands of his own day like this: If you want the kind of honour that the Church has for Christ, then take the same care for her as Christ has for the Church. Even if it shall be needful for you to give your life for her, even to be cut into pieces ten thousand times, or any suffering at all, don't refuse to do that. Even then, you won't have gone as far as Christ did.

Call To Conversion

The sacraments are holy covenant moments of grace, where Christ is fully present in a real way, demonstrating the kingdom by his own self sacrificial love. The Christian life is a call to make everything holy, to make everything sacramental. It's not easy, but it is our one ultimate calling. There is no other one which can fully satisfy. It is something to which we are called to submit, to serve, not as slaves, but as men and women who seek the kingdom of love.

Key Scripture Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *O God, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.*

Collect: *Be my protection, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me.*

Ephesians: *Brothers and sisters, be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church, the body of which he is the Saviour ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her ... by cleansing her with the washing of water. Husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies (which he) nourishes and tenderly cares for, as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body ... A man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.*

Psalms: *Happy is the one who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways ... Your wife will be like a fruitful vine (and) your children will be like olive shoots around your table.*

Luke: *Jesus said: the kingdom of God ... is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed ... It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made their nests in its branches. To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with flour until it was all leavened.*