

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 31st Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1 St Peter's 8:30 am/7:00 pm Masses - November 7, 2023**

**Romans 12:5-16** "Serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope. Be patient in suffering. Persevere in prayer ."

**Psalms 131:1-3** "I do not occupy myself with things too great for me."

**Luke 14:15-24** "Compel people to go in to the banquet so that my house may be filled."

### **Overwhelming Tasks**

#### **Introduction**

To Do lists are great. They keep us focused on what we have to get done. The problem with a To Do list is that it very easily becomes the goal. Crossing things off that list is very satisfying. I even add things on to the list that I have already done, just so I can cross it off the list. Productivity experts usually suggest that we do the most important things first. If we accomplish a great many tasks but don't do what is really important, we will be deceived into thinking that we have had a successful day. I do this.

#### **Romans**

St. Paul gives us an amazing list of the qualities of a Christian. Every one of them is deserving of our attention. These are the things we should do and should be if we are in Christ. Right away I want to include them along with all of the other things I have to do. But what is the good of completing all those other tasks if I do not become what Jesus himself calls me to be and do.

Very well. That makes sense. Focus on what is good and holy. But even there, very quickly I am overwhelmed with the many ways I must still become a better Christian. Near the end of his letter to the Roman church, St Paul provides a summary of what the Christian life is all about: Let your love be genuine. Hate what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. Outdo one another in showing honour. Be fervent in faith. If you are lukewarm, ask for zeal.

Our most important task today is to become a saint. Paul's list is that of the qualities of a saint. I don't know about you, but I can't see myself becoming all of

those things at once. I have to do them one at a time. St. Teresa of Avila focused on one mystery of the rosary every day and she became one of the greatest models of growing from a self-centered proud young person to one of the greatest models of the Christian life.

Pay attention to the psalmist before going to the list which Paul gives us. Do you see this? "I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me." So this is exactly the attitude we should bring to that list of qualities of the Christian. Sure, we should do every one of them. However, to think we can improve ourselves in all those areas at once is a thing of pride and, in the process, we will exhaust ourselves with trying.

How many in our time have become overwhelmed with many tasks? How many have let the Martha in us run wild, with no restrictions? In the process, how many of us have lost or thrown away our invitation to the great banquet in the kingdom of heaven?

## **Luke**

Today, the Lord offers us an image of eternity represented by a banquet. The banquet denotes the place where the family and friends gather together to celebrate and enjoy the company, the conversation and the friendship, sitting around the same table. This image speaks of our intimacy with God as Trinity and the joy we will find in the Promised Land. He has made everything for us and He calls us in for "everything is now ready" (Lk 14:17). He wants us with him; He wants all men and women by His side, each one of us.

Jesus invites everyone to the great heavenly banquet. It is quite legitimate, I think, for us to think of everyone who is invited to be part of the kingdom. God intends to fill it. Jesus says elsewhere that there are many rooms in the kingdom. Because God is not wasteful, every one of those rooms and every seat at the table will be filled. We can understand this, not as a large but finite dining hall. What it means is that God already knows who will respond to the invitation. The kingdom banquet will be filled with every one of those.

We will be coming very shortly to the end of the liturgical year, the feast of Christ the king. His subjects will be those who have responded to his invitation. It will not be those who think themselves deserving. It will be all of us who are able to recognize our brokenness, our poverty and our needs. It will be all of us who turn to God in gratitude for the invitation and do not imagine that there is something worldly, even good things, which can replace this invitation to the glorious heavenly banquet: not our land, not our possessions, not even our relationships. This does not mean that these are evil things. Of course not. But these things must not blind ourselves to the greater goods. In fact, these good things should point us towards the one who gives them to us so that we might be ready for the invitation to go and give honour to the one who gives them all to us.

### **Call to Conversion**

How many in our culture today are making excuses not to attend the banquet of the Lord. How truly Jesus has spoken about our time. So many distractions from what is important have blinded us to what is being offered right now. Today, let us make our To Do list with the first item being to respond to his invitation.

## Key Passages

**Entrance Antiphon:** *The Lord is my light and may salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Whom should I dread? When those who do evil draw near, they stumble and fall.*

**Collect:** *O God, from whom all good things come, grant that we who call on you in our need may do what is right by your guidance.*

**Romans:** *In Christ we are one body. We have gifts according to the gifts given to us: prophecy in proportion to faith; ministry in ministering; the teacher in teaching; the exhorter in exhortation; the giver in generosity; the leader in diligence; the compassionate in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine. Hate what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. Love one another with mutual affection. Outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal. Be ardent in spirit. Serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope. Be patient in suffering. Persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints. Extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you. Do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Do not claim to be wiser than you are.*

**Psalm:** *O Lord, my heart is not lifted up. My eyes are not raised to high. I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child with its mother.*

**Luke:** *A dinner guest at the Pharisee's house on the Sabbath said, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. But all who were invited began to make excuses: I have bought a piece of land and must go out and see it; I have bought five yoke of oxen and am going to try them out; I have just been married and cannot come. When the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame had come, there was still room. The master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes and compel people to come in so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner."*