

Homily For Tuesday of the 31st Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - Nov 3, 2020

Phil 2: 5-11 "He emptied himself ... was born in human likeness ... was obedient to death ... was exalted."

Psalm 22:25-31 "The poor shall be satisfied ... and all nations shall worship him ... and proclaim deliverance."

Luke 14:15-24 "Compel people to come in to fill my house ... none of those invited will taste my dinner."

Kenosis and Glory

Introduction

I'm no prophet but today we are at a very dramatic moment in the world. As covid cases spike, governments are considering whether to return to lockdown type measures. Much more than this, though, the US federal election will have profound and far reaching impacts. Will there be a continued move to protect the unborn, to strengthen traditional family according to God's definition, or will the abortion and anti family and anti Christian agenda gain new momentum in the US and around the world?

We have much in the world to shake our confidence. But no election can damage the rock we cling to, the rock upon which we build our faith, our life, our hope and our love. These readings are not ancient tales. They are alive in the present moment and tell us of our destiny.

Philippians

We don't get to hear or sing our hymns these days. I hope you are doing it in your car or at home because we have not been permitted to sing our faith in church. Paul records the words of an incredibly beautiful and powerful hymn. Whether or not he wrote it, this is our entire faith understanding wrapped up in the words of a hymn.

Long before the doctrine of the Trinity was finally articulated, the hymn expresses the teaching that Jesus is God. At the incarnation, which we will soon begin to prepare for during Advent, the 2nd person of the Holy Trinity took on our flesh,

our form, not just physical form but our whole way of being. He came to be like us so he could directly invite us to be like him, to have the mind of Christ, his mind.

Most of the Greek words you hear preachers refer to don't have to be memorized. They are used to help with understanding the text. Today's key Greek word is 'kenosis'. If you are going to remember one word from biblical Greek, this is the one. Kenosis. Not ketosis. That's what happens in the body when someone is doing a low carbohydrate diet. Kenosis is when Jesus said 'no' to the status of equality with God. Jesus saw his exalted position not as something to be grasped exploited. It means that he emptied himself of every divine privilege and poured himself into our human identity. That's kenosis.

But Jesus didn't just put on a human Halloween costume. It says that he took on our likeness. Now that's very interesting and could remind us of another time when 'likeness' is used. At creation, God made man and woman in his image and likeness. We were made, not to be God but to be like God in some way. But that likeness was lost, or at least severely tarnished, because of the first deliberate act of disobedience. Since then, we have this tendency to disobedience.

Why does it say that the human form Jesus took on is the form of a slave? It is slavery to sin, to disordered self love, which takes the place of love of God. That's how we know it is disordered love. It takes on for ourselves what belongs to God alone. But Christ willingly left that status and entered into our brokenness so he could heal it from the inside, not like a doctor writing a prescription but drawing it out of us and taking it into himself. And how did he do that? By an ultimate act of obedience which healed that first disobedience for those willing to take on his mind.

Psalm

The psalm today is really really important. It is Psalm 22, the most intense suffering psalm. It is highlighted in the passion narratives. "They cast lots for my clothing." "I can feel all my bones." And, you will know this verse from the psalm: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." Jesus is praying this psalm from

the cross, his ultimate act of obedience. No one takes my life from me. I lay down my life.

Today we have the second half of that psalm, where the 'suffering servant', a prophecy of Jesus Christ, entrusts himself in the Lord. This is the greatest prophecy because it tells of the result of the kenosis of Jesus. All families and all nations, then all generations will come and worship the Lord give glory to God.

Luke and the Parable Meal

I've short changed the Gospel reading and the words of Jesus to try to provide a foundation for why Jesus tells kingdom banquet parables. This one comes just after another dinner where the guests were vying for the places of honour.

Within the context of a dinner, Jesus tells a parable about a dinner, in response to one of the guests who suggests how wonderful it will be to eat bread in heaven. The conversation is about being filled. But Jesus models what it takes to be at that banquet. It requires being empty. That's why the poor and the lame fill the banquet.

What's the final line? "I tell you, none of those invited will taste my dinner." Why not? Because those invited were caught up in the pleasures and the affairs of their worldly existence. We can't earn a place at the heavenly banquet, but we do have to conform ourselves, to shape ourselves to the one who gives the banquet.

Call To Action

What's the call to action for us today? It's the call to self emptying. If I am full of myself, I cannot take on the mind of Christ.

The cross is the most terrible thing the world has ever done. But God turned that evil into the redemption of the world.

Regardless of what happens on election day or what tribulations we have to go through, we can be assured that God is victorious. Let us make this act of worship and our lives a sign of kenosis, so that we may share in his victory.

Key Scripture Passages

Collect: *Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name.*

Philippians: *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus who, though in the form of God, emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness ... and form, humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death on a cross. Therefore God highly exalted him so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Psalms: *The poor shall eat and be satisfied ... and all the families of the nations shall worship before him ... to him shall all who sleep in the earth bow down ... Future generations will proclaim his deliverance to a people as yet unborn.*

Luke: *Jesus was at the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal. One of the dinner guests said to Jesus: Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! Jesus said to him: Someone gave a great dinner. He sent his slave to those invited to say come for everything is ready. But they all began to make excuses: A piece of land ... five yoke of oxen ... just married ... please accept my regrets The owner became angry and said: Go into the streets and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. Then the master said: Go out 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.*