

Homily For Tuesday of the 33rd Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - Nov 17, 2020

Rev 3:1-6,14-22 "Buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, and white robes for clothes."

Psalm 15:1-5 "I will place on my throne those who stand by their oath, even to their hurt."

Luke 19:1-10 "Salvation has come. The Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Hear What the Lord Has To Say

Introduction

Back at the beginning of all this that is going on, we listened to every word, every report. How many cases? How bad is it? How easily is it transmitted? What should we do? We've had some of those questions answered but mostly, eight months later, we've been pounded with the same messages. You know them. Wash your hands, wear a mask, stay two meters apart, stay home if you have symptoms and, above all, don't relax. Don't let down your guard. It's relentless. It's wearing us down with worry.

While those things remain important to our physical health, I submit to you that you have just heard a news bulletin that far exceeds those things in critical importance to our deepest health, both now in the present moment, and for all eternity. Nowhere in the culture at large do we hear the message of hope that you have just heard today. Nowhere else do we see a light shining on the path to a profound and transformative wellbeing and happiness.

Who is today's news anchor, giving us a reminder, a warning to be sure, but also a path to true hope? Why, of course it's Jesus, the anointed one of God, the saviour of the world, the Messiah, the Christ, and also the judge of the living and the dead.

Revelation: The Judgement of the Churches

We don't often get the direct words of Jesus in both readings, so today is an especially good day to listen to our Lord. In the book of the Revelation, we hear the report card, the judgment, of two churches which were so alive in Christ when

they were first established. For us, it's a tremendous opportunity to reflect on how we are doing as people who carry the name of Christ.

The church at Sardis hears Jesus say: You think you are alive but, except for a few of you, you are dead. I know your works. You have stopped doing the works of holiness. The church at Laodicea hears Jesus say: You think you have enough riches that you don't have to worry about anything, but you have the wrong kind of riches. You think you are fine with what you are doing, but you are worse than dead. Because of this, I will spit you out of my mouth.

The churches at that time hear exactly what the churches today need to hear. There is tremendous good news for those who keep awake, who stay alert for the voice of God. And, if they do, they will hear Jesus proclaim their names to the Father. They will wear pure white robes without stain. This is the Church's destiny. This is the destiny of every one of us, for our names to be written in the book of life. Can there be anything which could give us more peace and joy? I don't think so.

Luke: Corrective Action

Zacchaeus was rich by the world's standard, but he discovered, by the light of Christ, that he is like the churches at Sardis and Laodicea. His works made him poor and in danger of spiritual death.

Jesus was going to pass through Jericho. But Zacchaeus sensed that salvation would be passing right next to him. It says he wanted to know who Jesus was. That's the key. He sought the true identity of God in Jesus Christ. It tells us that identity like it told Zacchaeus. Jesus; identity and purpose is to seek and save the lost. That's all of us without Jesus. Zacchaeus was completely transformed. With Jesus, his priorities and his works became those of the Kingdom of God.

The Good News

We don't hear much good news today, and it's wearing on all of us. It's soul destroying. But THE Good News is proclaimed to us today in our hearing. The world judged Zacchaeus as being beyond salvation. But his heart had been longing

for something more. He found that greater thing in Jesus. Upon finding that treasure, his joy was so great that he gladly traded his physical riches for the greatest wealth of all.

Zacchaeus is a hero for us. In almost exactly the same way, St. Elizabeth of Hungary is one of our great heroines. She also had riches, but she put it all at the service of the poor and needy. Did it bring her misery? No, it was the exact opposite. She died at 24, but full of joy, and our Lord knew her holy works. She was canonized only four years after her death, a remarkable recognition that she had totally been transformed by her relationship with Jesus Christ.

Receiving Jesus is not impossible. It's not harder than washing our hands and wearing a mask. We just have to want it as much as we want our physical health. We just have to want to hear Jesus say: I know your works. You have conquered. You have made your clothes white.

Jesus is passing through right now. But he won't pass by those who are seeking, those who are awake and looking for him. Isn't the thing we want most is to have our name be in the book of life and to hear Jesus proclaim our name to the Father? Let us pray today that we will wake up, that we will know our need to repent, that we will recognize Jesus standing at the door of our hearts and knocking. Will you and I let him come in. He wants to dine with you today?

Key Passages

Collect: *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary recognized and revered Christ in the poor. Grant, through her intercession that we may serve with unflinching charity the needy and those afflicted.*

Revelation: *In my vision, I, John, heard the voice of the Lord: And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: I know your works. You have a name of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up and strengthen what remains ...If not, I will come like a thief ... Yet you have still a few persons who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white. I will not blot your name out of the book of life... And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. So, because you are lukewarm, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. For you say: I am rich and I need nothing. You do not realize that you are wretched, and pitiable, poor, blind and naked. Therefore, buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you ... I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you ... Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*

Psalm: *Those who are victorious, I will place on my throne. Those who stand by their oath, even to their hurt, who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent.*

Luke: *Jesus was passing through Jericho. Zacchaeus, a very rich chief tax collector was trying to see who Jesus was, but was short in stature, so climbed a sycamore tree. Jesus looked up and said: Zacchaeus, hurry down, for I must stay at your house today. He was happy to welcome Jesus. All who saw it began to grumble and said: He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner. Zacchaeus said to the Lord: Look, half of my possessions I will give to the poor. And, if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times. Then Jesus said: Today salvation has come to this house ... for the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.*

St. Elizabeth of Hungary: *How could I bear a crown of gold when the Lord bears a crown of thorns? And, he bears it for me. People resented the things she did for the poor and sick. Her husband died of the plague. Renowned for her prayer, works of charity and her spirit of penance. She died at 24 and was canonized four years later, in 1235.*