

Homily For Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1

St Peter's 8:30am Mass - January 29, 2019

(Memorial - St. Francis de Sales)

Hebrews 10:1-10 "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Psalm 40:1-10 "Then I said, Here I am."

Mark 3:31-35 "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother. "

The Will of God

Introduction

This week we celebrate some pretty amazing saints. I guess they are all amazing. That's why the Church recognizes them as such. Today we honour St. Francis de Sales as one who trusted in God's authority. In the 16th century, when the authority of Christ's Church was being rejected, St. Francis was an important part of the movement to re-establish trust in Christ, to make the Church more obviously a visible sign of the family of God, one that people could trust.

I was thinking about more of the things that parents used to say to children that you would never hear today. One of those was: "Do what you are told." In days gone by, that was a command that ended any discussion or any whining. It didn't make us children happy, but it did make sense because it was the voice of authority. It might even have been used unjustly, but it was authoritative.

St. Francis de Sales

In a way, that is what St. Francis de Sales was dealing with. The Church had always sounded authoritative, but people wanted more than just authority. They wanted integrity. They wanted a Church that looked like what it claimed to be, like Christ himself, who came to do God's will, and who sacrificed himself as proof.

When they told Jesus that his mother and relatives were waiting to see him, his response was very clear. It is those who do the will of God who are his family. It's not worldly privilege that makes this happen. St. Francis enjoyed a privileged upbringing and education. He was a well liked and intelligent. In worldly terms, he had it all. But he had a terrible internal struggle. One of the ideas of that century's

rebellion against the Church was that some people were predestined to eternal damnation. St. Francis had such thoughts like this that it tells us he went into a deep two year depression. God healed him of this fear, and afterwards Francis consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He later became a priest, rejecting a lucrative career and married life. Because he did God's will, through his gentleness, preaching skill, zeal for the faith, and his clear explanations of Catholic doctrine, he returned thousands to the Catholic faith. He apparently even used sign language to convert the deaf.

If we want to follow this path of obedience and trust, we only have to read and follow the absolutely amazing spiritual work he wrote called 'Introduction to the Devout Life'. In it he wrote such things as "We shall steer safely through every storm so long as our heart is right, our intention fervent, our courage steadfast, and our trust fixed on God."

Mark

We can admire and learn how to be a disciple like St. Francis. Like all the saints, he will turn our attention back to our Lord, who tells us in today's Gospel: Whoever does the will of God is my mother and my family. It can appear that Jesus is rejecting his own mother. However, the way Pope Benedict XVI says this about Mary's words of the Magnificat, "My soul magnifies the Lord". The great Pope of our time says that, "in these words Mary expresses her whole program of life: not setting herself at the centre, but leaving space for God; only then does goodness enter the world." (Benedict XVI).

Hebrews

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews quotes Psalm 40, which says "I come to do your will, O God." That letter has been proclaiming Jesus as the priest who offers himself as victim. He shows the path for all saints to follow. Do God's will. It's not easy for you and I, of course. But it is simple. Jesus is doing the will of the father who wants an obedient heart. He wants sons and daughters who obey and trust and love him. That's why we pray at every mass and during every rosary:

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Well, we are not praying that God's will just happens. We are praying that God's will be done in us.

Call To Conversion

Soon we will make Lenten sacrifices. Just like the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, our Lenten sacrifices year after year do not make us holy either. It is Christ who makes us holy, in the same way he made the water of baptism holy and the bread and wine of the Eucharist holy. What our Lenten sacrifices should do for us is to remind us of our need for God, that we cannot overcome sin except by his grace and the once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who perfectly accomplished God's will.

We need to open our hearts to truly do God's will. As Mary and the disciples closest to him did, conform, or mould, our wills to God's will. Pray every day at the beginning of the day "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will." And when life gets hard, as it sometimes does, and we don't know what to do or how to think, say it again "Lord, let your will be done in me so that I might truly be your brother, your sister, a sharer in your own Blessed Life.

St. Francis de Sales, Pray for us.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *I will appoint a shepherd to pasture them and I, the Lord, will be their God.*

Collect: *O God who, for the salvation of souls, willed that the Bishop Saint Francis de Sales become all things to all, following his example we may always display the gentleness of your charity in the service of your neighbour.*

Hebrews: *The law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities. It can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year. When Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. As it is written, See God I have come to do your will. He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Psalm: *I waited and the Lord inclined to me and heard my cry. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, Here I am.*

Mark: *They said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside asking for you." He replied, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."*