

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

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

Hebrews 10: 1-10 "By God's will we have been sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ once for all."

Psalm 40: 1-10 "I delight to do your will, O my God. Your law is within my heart."

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

Intro

My mother is an important person in my life. She gave me my Catholic faith and taught by example and through discipline never to sacrifice your standards of right and wrong. My brothers and I would have liked her to be a little more flexible at times. In a way, this is what the world wants the Church to be like. Hey, this is the way people are today. Couldn't you just conform yourself to the world's way and be a little more tolerant of its behaviours?

My mother has a kind of iron will. She knew what was important and never wavered from it. There were times when we wished that she could relax that iron will just a little bit. Now I see that this consistency is what builds character. This is the same character that the Church is called to provide for us. However, without the mother's love and nurturing that she also gave us, and that the Body of Christ, the Church, is called to be, that will would only have been a barren kind of harshness.

The Will of God

One of the petitions in the greatest prayer of all, the our Father, asks God to make His will- the same will that rules heaven- active on earth in the same way: "May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Earth and heaven united by the will of God!!!

But what is the will of God? We could express it that God's will is expressed in a plan. The catechism begins, in its very first paragraph, but telling us that God's will is expressed in his plan for our salvation. This is no harsh and unloving imposition. "A plan of sheer goodness" it is called. And what is that plan? That all should

experience eternal beatitude, a sharing in God's own Blessed Life. That is what God's will- his desire- is for us. When we come to do God's will, we are allowing his plan to be worked out in our lives.

The letter to the Hebrews expresses it in this way: "And by (God's) will, we have been sanctified (made Holy- made sharers in the plan) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." We see how tangible is this offering. God could certainly offered that sacrifice entirely in a spiritual manner, because His being is entirely spiritual. No, he took on our bodies so his offering of himself would be through our physical nature. But then, by his will, this once for all offering was made perfect through his Spirit- the Holy Spirit. His will became a perfect offering so that we might be sharers in that divine plan.

The Family of God

What we notice in this visit by Jesus' family, including his Blessed mother, that they are outside, and the scribes who had just accused him of being possessed by the devil are on the inside. Mark makes it symbolically clear that there are worldly definitions about who is in and who is out. Just like the little children or the paralytic, who couldn't get in to see Jesus until he opened the door, as it were, we have ways of determining who is in and who is out.

As Jesus always does, he flips human understanding on its head. He turns it around. He gives it new and profound meaning. It looks like Jesus is putting down his mother and his family members but, instead, our Lord widens the scope of his spiritual family to include his disciples, not to exclude his Mother or his biological relatives. As Jesus always, always, always does, he takes what is seen as the best of human experience- the family in this case- and gives it a new status. You don't get to be a part of this family merely by biological processes or by having the name of mother or brother or sister. You have to make the choice to be a follower of the one who will open the door to blessed life with God.

The Plan Coming Together

Jesus isn't putting down his family, or the idea of family. He is raising it up to a new status. After all, who is the one person who we identify as most having

conformed herself to God's will? It is Mary, Jesus' mother. She is the very one who echoes the psalmist when she says "Let it be done to me according to your will." She is on the outside in Mark's story but she is the one who defines for us how to be on the inside of God's family. It is a matter of the humility to let God's will be made living and active in us.

Call To Action

Now, what must we do to be a member of God's family?

First, our baptism has already made it so. But, without activating the grace of our baptism - opening the gift we have already been given - we will still be on the outside. The invitation is there. Christ is there. The grace to make it real is spread out before us. God's plan of sheer goodness is waiting to be fulfilled.

Second, 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 it gets hard 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 God's plan to share his own Blessed Life.