

Homily For Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Ordinary Time - Year II St Peter's 8:30/7:00 Masses - Jan 23, 2024

2 Sam 6:12-19 "David brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and the sound of the trumpet."

Psalm 24:7-10 "Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

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

Prophet, Priest and King

Introduction

My mother visited recently. She came to a talk I was giving. She could not hear very well at the back of the room so she came up and sat right beside me. However, as soon as I started to speak, she looked at the audience and broke in with the words, "I can never get him to stop talking." That actually broke the ice pretty well. I had more credibility because I gave way to my mother at that moment.

Mark

Catholics may be uncomfortable at the way Mary is treated in this passage. She is outside and can't get close to Jesus due to the crowds. There is no indication that she is being impatient or demanding to see him. We would not expect that from her. But finally the word gets passed along to him, while he is teaching, that she is there outside. When Jesus hears of her presence, he does what he always does, which is to do or say something unexpected. The expected thing would have been to honour her in some way. She is his mother, after all, a high place of honour in Jewish family life, as it should be in ours. On top of that, for us, we know her as the Blessed Virgin Mary, so we might ask whether Jesus is lowering her importance by what he says.

The exact opposite is true. Jesus never dishonours family relationships. No, but he always uses human family life to point to the higher reality and goal of the spiritual, with God as Father and all people who desire to draw close to him as his children.

Jesus says that all people can be his mother or brother or sister. That's pretty radical. The disciple can, in a real way, be a member of that family, but not by the simple fact of biology. To be his mother or brother or sister, what you need are two things. First is to be near to Jesus. That is how we experience the light that helps us understand clearly what is true. Jesus is the truth and to be close to him is to experience light pouring into our minds. Second, what you need is to do the will of God. That means to desire and to act in obedience to the truth that our illumined intellects help us see.

The point is that all are united in their obedience to the authority of the Father, of whom Jesus is the exact and complete image. And what is the will of God that unites us in a family bond to Jesus the Messiah? It is doing God's will makes us part of the family of God.

2 Samuel

King David was Jesus' ancestor. That's biology. This is important for the fact that God would reveal himself fully in Jesus, beginning with his biological ancestry. The New Testament reveals what is hidden in the Old Testament. But there is much more going on here. King David is called "a man after God's own heart" even by how he repented after he sinned. But today we hear of this great moment in Israel's history, when Jerusalem, the City of David, became the City of God.

David was the anointed king, to be sure. But here he is, full of the Spirit of God like the prophets of old, leading the people in a great liturgical act as they brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. Then he offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. Then he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. These are all the roles of the priest. In Israel, for many important reasons, the prophet and the priest and the king had to be different people. But, in this profound moment, there is a tremendous pointing forward to the time when there would be an ultimate king, who would reveal in himself the prophetic word of God, and who, in the greatest sacrificial offering the world has ever known, would make himself the sacrifice which saves the peoples of all nations. Jesus is the priest who offers sacrifice and blesses the people. He does this in many ways but most profoundly at the Last Supper when he offers bread and wine which he

bleses, breaks and gives to his disciples, then goes out and offers the sacrifice of his own body and blood on the cross, in a perfect act of self giving.

This inspired act of King David's would therefore foreshadow the time when kingship, prophecy and priesthood would be permanently and perfectly joined in Jesus Christ. He is the one from whom all authority comes, including David's. He is the king of kings, the king of glory, the Lord of hosts.

Conversion

This same Jesus, the king of glory, points forward to his spiritual family: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." Jesus is exhorting those sitting there, and us today, to enter into spiritual communion with him, in humility and obedience. At the same time, therefore, he is also praising the one who united her heart and soul and body with the Divine Will. Saint Augustine says about this, "Her nearness as a mother would have been of no profit to Mary, had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh."

"My soul magnifies the Lord," she says. In these words Mary expresses her heart for God, making him the center of her life, by which goodness and light and truth enter the world of human families. She becomes the mother of Jesus and the mother of all disciples who will do the same.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *Save your people, Lord, bless your heritage, and govern them forever.*

Collect: *Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name, for you never deprive of your guidance those you set firm on the foundation of your love.*

2 Samuel: *David brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. Along the way he sacrificed an ox and danced before the Lord with all his might. David was girded with a linen ephod. He and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and the sound of the trumpet. They brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it. There David offered burnt offerings of well being before the Lord. He blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts and distributed food among all the people. Then they all went back to their homes.*

Psalm: *Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the king of glory may come in. Who is the king of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty.*

Mark: *The mother of Jesus and his brothers came to the house where he was and standing outside they sent to him. A crowd was sitting around him and they said, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." He replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."*