

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 5th Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1 St Peter's 8:30am Mass - February 7, 2023**

**Genesis 1:20 - 2:4** "On the 7th day he rested. So he blessed that day and hallowed it."

**Psalm 8:3-8** "What is mortal man that you care for him. You have put all things under their feet."

**Mark 7:1-13** "In vain do they worship me ... abandoning God's commandment for human tradition."

### **God Saw That It Was Good**

#### **Introduction**

For the next few weeks, along with continuing through Mark's Gospel, we have the telling of the Genesis of everything. The beginning of everything. You and I always need to be able to explain these events to an unbelieving culture.

They tell us that it is just another creation myth folk tale, a simplistic primitive myth. However, there is no other creation story from any culture which can hold a candle to the biblical account for its completeness and accuracy.

They tell us the science is all wrong. First of all, it is not a science textbook. It is a poem, a most beautiful reflection of how God has made order from chaos, something from nothing. Second, there is some pretty accurate science contained within the telling. All of the elements of the natural world, from the cosmos to life itself, are there. For a people who did not have the rigid science mindset we have, they got much of it right on.

The first three days of creation give the universal structure. Light and darkness, land and sea. The next three days he fills in the structure with a rich diversity of life. All of it is good.

#### **Genesis**

Today's passage includes day six, which ends with the creation of human beings, made somehow with an element of the divine. Male and female made in his image and likeness. Psalm 8 is a hymn of praise for creation, but also for the way that God has made us, for our place in that creation and in the heart of God. The creator of order and beauty creates us for relationship with him as human beings,

and with each other as male and female. There has always been the temptation to create ourselves in an image of our own making. Every time and every generation has attempted this. However, if we go against the way we have been made in favour of an idol of our own making, we will be miserable. God has made us for joy, not for misery.

On the 7th day God rested. This does not mean he was tired. What it means is that he created a space for us to focus on God and other relationships. The 7th day rest gives everything up to that point its meaning. On that day, we look up from creation to the creator. Again, without this looking to God, true happiness becomes impossible. Throughout the human story, God invites his people to participate in his rest. That doesn't mean television and video games. It means relationship with the Lord of the universe.

## **Mark**

For the Christian, this relationship is always about Jesus. And what does every event in Jesus' life tell us? To what does every single interaction he has with people point? It is the answer to the question: Where is your heart? What does your behaviour say about where God is in your life?

Nowhere in the world outside these doors do we hear proclaimed a concern for the health of our eternal souls. Jesus is not against hand washing before eating. He is not against us taking measures to break the chain of illness. But Jesus asks those who question him whether their hearts are clean from hostility, jealousy, envy and pride? He asks these same questions of us. Do we honour God's commandments. Do we make Sabbath or, for us, the Lord's Day, into a day of worship of God?

Jesus Christ is the authentic interpreter of Divine Law. Today's Gospel passage highlights the 4th commandment, which reminds sons and daughters to help their mothers and fathers, especially during times of illness, loneliness or anguish. This is a duty of gratitude.

The law is not to be a burden. Rather, all laws must be a recognition of how God has made us, who God has made us to be, and that we are made for life giving relationship. Jesus did not abolish the law. He fulfilled its purpose of self giving love.

### **Call To Conversion**

God made us for worship and for relationship and for self giving love. We have a responsibility to be a sign of worship and praise, a holy sign, that God has made all things wonderful.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *As for me, in justice I shall behold your face. I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.*

**Collect:** *O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, give all who are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does him honour.*

**Genesis:** *God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures and let the birds fly above the earth ..." God blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." God said: "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind ... and God saw that it was Good." Then God said: "Let us make human beings in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds, and the cattle, and all the wild animals of the earth." So God created human beings male and female. He blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion. God said: "I have given you every seed and fruit for food." God saw it was very good. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done and he rested on the seventh day. So he blessed that day and hallowed it.*

**Psalms:** *What is man that you are mindful of him? Mortal man that you care for him? You have given them dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under their feet.*

**Mark:** *The Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus: "Why do your disciples not live according to the traditions but eat with defiled hands (without thoroughly washing them according to the tradition of ritual purity). Jesus said to them: "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites: This people honours me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. In vain do they worship me ... you abandon the commandment of God and hold to human traditions ... Moses said: Honour your father and mother but you say that if anyone tells father or mother Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban (that is, an offering to God), then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition."*