

## **Homily For Friday of the First Week of Lent - Year 1**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - Feb. 23, 2024**

**Ezekiel 18:21-28** "When the wicked turn to God , they shall save their life."

**Psalms 130:1-6** "With you, O Lord, there is forgiveness, so that you may be revered."

**Matthew 5:20-26** "Be reconciled, then offer your gift at the altar."

### **Turn On the Spiritual GPS**

#### **Introduction**

If you were to ask me whether GPS for the car is a good thing, I would answer 'yes and no'. That GPS is able to see almost everything from above. When I have no idea the directions to follow to get where I am going, it can feel almost like God himself saying: You can trust me. Place yourself in my hands and I will get you to where you want to go. So, that is a wonderfully useful technology.

On the other hand, it perhaps gets us used to putting a little too much trust in that same technology. Last week, I accidentally put the wrong location into my phone. Without any worry in the world, I went in the wrong direction for awhile, finally angrily resetting it. What if it tells me to turn but it's dark and I can't see where that turn is.

As people of faith, who know what Sacred Scripture tells us about worship of idols, can we see the potential for idolatry of technology? Today, the world needs to be reminded that technology is not God. We see all around us people turning to all kinds of technology for assurance, for direction, for entertainment, for wisdom. It tells us something that more and more Catholics make their Lenten sacrifice the reducing or getting rid of screen time.

How is this relevant? Well, the readings today are good for Lent because Lent is the time of year when we turn to our spiritual GPS. Things really become clear during Lent. The choice really becomes obvious during Lent. The two paths really light up, the one to the kingdom of heaven and the other to the kingdom of Satan.

## **Ezekiel**

How clear are the prophetic words of Ezekiel. If someone sins but repents, God will forgive them. If they have done good works but turn to wickedness, God will judge them. If a really bad person turns to God, he shall live. He shall be saved. He shall find the right path. But, if a good man turns away from doing good, and does evil things, he shall die. What was the right path, makes a really wrong turn towards death, which is the loss of relationship with God. In New testament terms, it is being thrown out of the kingdom into the dark where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, to quote Jesus. When it comes to our lives, the ending is what matters. It is entirely about whether our hearts have been turned to God. If we say to God, look how many more good things I did than bad, it is useless.

## **Matthew**

The Sermon on the Mount is the GPS for our life. Jesus gives us the path. You have heard it said, don't kill. But I say don't be angry but be reconciled with your brother or sister. Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Hear that? If you follow your own ideas, your own technology, your own GPS, your idols, you will not enter the kingdom.

Jesus says that if, while offering your gift at the altar, you remember some unresolved hostility with someone in your life, you must go and make peace with them before returning to the altar. At weekday mass the gifts of bread and wine are already here at the altar, so it is easy to miss that the heart of what is offered on the altar is not what is not the hosts made by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, or the wine purchased from an approved source. It is what you and I have to give. It is ourselves, our hearts, that are to be offered on the altar along with bread and wine. God takes both kinds of gift and transforms them into himself. With our spiritual GPS turned on, our coming to the altar must pass through reconciliation.

This is why we have the sacrament of Reconciliation. When I was a child the lineups for confession were almost as long as the lines coming up for communion. Not so any more. The path that used to lead so clearly through being reconciled

to God and others before getting to the altar has been lost to technology. This problem would make our gift useless, in vain.

### **Call To Conversion**

The psalmist says, "Lord, If you mark iniquity, who can stand? But with you, O Lord, there is forgiveness." Is there a better way clarity for what is at stake this Lent? Let us offer hearts willing to reconcile. Let us make ourselves ready to receive his mercy, the only good that matters. Let us turn on the GPS that God is offering. Let us hear his voice with confidence and peace.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *O Lord, see my lowliness and suffering, and take away all my sins.*

**Collect:** *Grant that your faithful. O Lord, may be so conformed to you that the bodily discipline now solemnly begun may bear fruit to the souls of all.*

**Ezekiel:** *The word of the Lord came to me: If the wicked turn away from all their sins and do what is right, they shall surely live. None of the transgressions shall be remembered against them. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live? But when the righteous turn away and do the same abominable things that the wicked do, shall they live? None of the righteous deeds that they have done shall be remembered. Yet you say: "The way of the Lord is unfair. Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the wicked turn away from their wickedness they shall save their life.*

**Psalm:** *If you O Lord, should mark iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord. My should waits and in his word I hope.*

**Gospel Acclamation:** *Rid yourselves of all your sins and make a new heart and a new spirit.*

**Matthew:** *Jesus taught them, "I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that You shall not murder. But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift.*