

Homily for Friday of the 8th Week of Ordinary Time
 1 Peter 4:7–13
 Psalm 96:10–13
 Mark 11:11–26

Today's reading from 1 Peter brings has some sage biblical words on time management.

Peter begins by reminding us to know what the time is.

The end of all things is near.

Two other Apostles, John and Paul say very similar things.”

“Children, it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18).

We are those “upon whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor.10.11)

Time, as read from the perspective of the New Testament, has entered into its final stages. Because of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ the most important event of world history has occurred and now time is measured by this event. Because we now know our personal destiny, which will be to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for what we did while in the body and because we know the destiny of the world is to be transformed at the Second Coming of Christ this influences how we use our time in the present.

In light of the end of all things Peter mentions three things about time management.

- Sober and Disciplined Prayer
- Constant Love
- Grace-filled Service

In the passage just before today's reading Peter referred to his reader's former way of life where they joined with friends in riotous and drunken living. He writes that because of their new found faith in Jesus Christ they are to live the rest of their earthly lives no longer by human desires but by the will of God.

Sober and Disciplined prayer is the counter foil to the undisciplined life they had previously lived. Why are seriousness and sobriety linked to our prayers? Because we need to remain clear-minded and alert if we are to pray with true knowledge and attentiveness. The cultivating of a daily prayer life will also keep us grounded and orientated as we live in a world with very different values from those of the Church, a world described in the last verses in today's passage as antagonistic towards the Church.

Joined to our prayers is love and hospitality.

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

What is Peter getting at when he says that “love covers a multitude of sins”? The background to this statement is Prov 10:12 (“love covers all offenses”), which Peter cites rather loosely. The primary meaning is that our love “covers over,” that is, “overlooks,” the “multitude” of daily sins that people commit against us. In this sense our love covers over the sins of others. Rather than allowing grudges and judgments to pile up, we are called to put away these offenses through the merciful love we extend to one another. Peter may also mean that our practice of merciful love toward one another will prompt God himself to “cover” our offenses. In this sense one’s love results in our *own* sins being forgiven by God: “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you” (Matt 6:14). Both meanings are true and Peter may have them both in mind here.

One of the key expression of this love is through the gift of hospitality. It is worth noting that he says we are to do this without complaining. Why? Remember in this letter Peter refers to how as Christians we are aliens and sojourners because this world is not our true home? When the Jewish people were aliens in the Sinai desert there attitude was one of constant grumbling and complaining. We are not to live that way. Rather because of the quality of Christian love we are to serve with the spirit and attitude of Jesus.

Disciplined Prayer, constant love is joined to grace filled service complete the trio of time management practices characteristic of those who live knowing the end of all things is near>

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

Just as the Greek word for “gift” (*charisma*) is built on the Greek word for “grace” (*charis*), so each one’s “gift” (*charisma*) is dependent on the varied “grace” (*charis*) of God. He is the single source of the variety of gifts (see Rom 12:3–8 and 1 Cor 12:4–11 for Paul’s treatment of spiritual gifts). In a similar way the word “steward” (*oikonomos*) builds on the root word “house” (*oikos*), providing further evidence for one of the letter’s central themes, that the Christian people are “the household of God.” All of us are called to be “stewards” of the spiritual gifts we have been given for the service of our brothers and sisters.

When we live with this kind of orientation and awareness of the time we will take to heart the importance of Sober and Disciplined Prayer, Constant Love and Grace-filled Service.