

OCTOBER 8, 2021
Friday of the 27th Week in Ordinary Time
Luke 11: 15-26

“STAND TO BE WITH GOD.”

Prophet Joel in our First Reading is a prophet of great concern. He was concerned that people do not listen to God's words and warning priests and ministers of evil doings and asked them to carry out repentance: “Put on sackcloth and lament; sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly and cry out to the Lord.”¹ Prophet Joel's call of repentance and coming back to the Lord was an anticipation of the coming of the ‘Day of Yahweh’, the day of judgement. If they do not repent, they will experience darkness and gloom away from the Lord. “Judgment is an uneasy word. A discomfoting possibility. Will it be a discomfoting reality? The answer lies in us. The answer lies in our world. Our options are clear. We are facing evil in ourselves and in the world. In a way we judge ourselves, we have to take a stand in the face of evil, in word and deed.”² We need to make a stand and that is the message of the gospel. Jesus is telling His listeners: “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”³ Decision is needed in our relationship with God. We need to stand for or against Him, we can not be neutral. There is no neutrality in Jesus, it is only yes or no. “This is something we need to reflect on with regard to our use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is easy to use the sacrament to get the forgiveness of our past sins and leave it at that. To have the feeling of now having a clean slate. Nature may abhor a vacuum but the devil loves one! The true reconciliation that the sacrament calls for, demands a new and stronger commitment to the living of our Christian life. The sacrament is intended to be an experience of conversion and change. It is much more concerned with the future than with the past. The past is gone and there is nothing we can do about it. The present is in our hands and

¹ Joel 1: 13-14 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

² stories4homilies.blogspot.com

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that is where we meet God.”⁴ The devil will always use our past sins but for God, the focus is today and to be better in the future. We need to strive for true repentance and contrition that we will never do again the past sins, change our hearts and with the help of the grace of God, will remain with Him throughout our lives. Along the way, there will be failures and it is not our weaknesses, failures and falling that are important to Him but our decision to stand, and begin again with God. For true change of heart and conversion, continuous repentance is necessary. Avoiding and driving out the evil one is just a beginning, we need to accept, welcome Jesus into our lives and make our hearts the place and home for Jesus so that evil spirit will not occupy and possess us again. We ask the Lord to make our hearts like His and persevere in our ongoing transformation, contrition and repentance.

So, which kingdom do we follow and serve? Are we for God or against God? My dear brothers and sisters, may our lives, words and deeds be the reflection and mirror that we are for God.

⁴ livingspace.sacredspace.ie