

Homily for Saturday of the Seventh Week of Easter - Year II

St Peter's 9:30am (virtual) Mass - May 30 2020

Acts 28:16-20,30-31 "He proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."

Psalm 11:4-7 "The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked."

John 21:20-25 "This disciple is testifying to these things and we know that his testimony is true."

The End ... Or Not

Introduction

It looks like the end. St. Paul is coming to the end of his life and preaching, as a captive, under house arrest in Rome, which will end with his martyrdom. Peter is coming to the end of his life with the prediction of how he will die. There is confusion about whether John will die or whether he will live until Jesus returns. And, the Gospel story seems to be coming to an end with this conversation between Jesus and the disciples after his resurrection.

But this is Paul, the Apostle, brash and reckless in those days, but whose letters we read over and over again to help us understand what we believe. And, this is Peter, so fallible and so like us in many ways, who carries the authority of Christ himself as the first head of the Church. And, this is John, the Apostle of love, we call him, because he never tires of reminding us that God is love, and all who live in God, live in love.

While, today, we stare face to face into what seems like the end, the end is not really the end. It is just the beginning. That's why, tomorrow, we tell the story of Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit of Christ with power, the beginning of the Church.

End of the Easter Season

We have just passed through an Easter season like no one alive today has ever experienced. We have been under a kind of house arrest. Our economy, by all reasonable accounts, is in a shambles. There are signs of the strain being expressed in violence. And, even though we are about to begin celebrating mass

that the lay faithful may attend, can anyone say that we will return to the way it was? Is this the end of what we have known? Is it the beginning of a 'new normal'? With God, what seems is never what is.

The sorrows that many have experienced do not change the fact that God is continuing to work out his plan of salvation of the human race. God is in charge. See how prophetic are the words of the psalm: "The Lord is in his holy temple. His eyes behold. His gaze examines human beings. The Lord is testing the righteous and the wicked." Make no mistake about it. The deeds of both the righteous and the wicked are on display, not just on the news but in heaven itself.

Not the End of the Good News

We are entering what we cannot call a return to what was. It's more like a return to what has never been. And we are asking the same kinds of questions that the disciples were asking Jesus. What's going to happen to me now? And Jesus is going to answer us the same way he answered Peter. Don't worry about that. You, follow me! We are asking: What's going to happen to him or her beside me? And Jesus is going to answer us the way he answered Peter: That's not your business. That's not what you should be concerned with. You, follow me!

The Church calls this period coming up, Ordinary Time. This is an amazing year to think about Ordinary Time. In the world there will be nothing ordinary about it. But, in the life of faith, Ordinary Time is still the time to testify to the truth. That's everyone's task, no matter what happens. We must show the world that Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Call To Action

The rest of the world is trying to make this transition entirely without God. But we are the disciples who must not let that happen. This is now a time to get back to the original business of being the disciple of Christ, the one who carries the name of Christ. If you were baptized, you were imprinted on your soul with an indelible seal, more permanent than any tattoo on the skin. You passed through a door into the life of grace, into the sacramental economy, which is not corrupted by

any worldly loss or confusion or poorly performing stock market. It is the economy of the grace of God.

Whether you are imprisoned in isolation or whether you are wondering what will happen to you or to yourself or the people around you, the task of the baptized is to give testimony, by your life, that Christ lived, that Christ died, that we are called to new life in Christ.

On the eve of the great feast of Pentecost, it is our calling to make way for the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and into the life of the world, with the power from on high. That is how we will testify. No one is outside of this calling. Will my life be short? Then live it with passion for Christ. Will it be a long life? Then make steady gains in your spiritual life. Decide today that you will make room in your heart for the Holy Spirit to reveal the fullness of truth to you, and through you to the world.

Let us cry out together: Lord, God, do not let me shrink from carrying the torch of faith into this confused world. Make my heart ready, O God, to be your light in the darkness. Call me, Lord of life. Your light will not end with me. I will follow you. Come, Holy Spirit, come.