

Homily For Tuesday of the 29th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - Oct. 18, 2022

(Feast of St. Luke, Apostle)

2 Timothy 4:9-17 "Come to me soon, Timothy, for Demas, in love with this present world, deserted me."

Psalms 145:10-18 "The Lord is near to all who call on him, who call on him in truth."

Luke 10:1-9 "I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves."

The Real 'Best Friends Forever'

Introduction

Two podcast hosts were talking about a document that Pope John Paul II had written. One of the hosts was telling the other how he had been with a delegation to Rome and he had had an audience with the future saintly man. He explained that he had asked the Pope a question and was starting to tell the other what John Paul said to him. At this point, his co-host cut him off and said: You shouldn't name drop like that. It kind of makes you sound proud. There was a pause before the first host responded: You know, you are right. Even Pope Benedict told me I shouldn't do that.

It is quite possible that those two co-hosts set that up for the sake of humour, or to make a point. However, we have probably all met someone who does what is called 'name dropping'. That is the idea of casually including the names of famous people someone has met or with whom they are supposedly friends. It is a constant temptation for many of us to submit to the multitude of ways that pride can creep in. One of the reasons pride is an enemy is that it is an attempt to build ourselves up, *as if* we do not already have the dignity of having been given life by the God of the universe, and *as if* the saviour and redeemer of the world, Jesus Christ, does not offer his friendship to every single person.

Psalm

The words of today's psalm are worth repeating as a teaching on when it is ok to 'name drop'. The psalmist says: "Your faithful tell of the glory of your kingdom." The antiphon goes like this: "Your friends tell of the glory of your kingship, Lord." So, these are two characteristics of those who do tell. The faithful who speak of the glory of the kingdom of God are the same as the friends of God who tell of the glory of God's kingship. To be faithful is to tell of the kingdom. To be a friend is to tell of the king himself.

2 Timothy

Paul's second letter to his good friend and protégé is one of the last letters he wrote before his death. Poor Paul. His friends have mostly deserted him. The way he speaks of each indicates the various ways friendship is lost. But it wasn't just personal friendship. He was lamenting the loss of those whose friendship was based on sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, for which he is now in prison and near the end of his life, a time when he is feeling the most need for that kind of friendship. Demas, especially, is significant. He leaves Paul because he is "in love with the present world." Probably this means he was overcome by fear of the consequences of preaching the Gospel. I think we know that in our day, there is a certain risk in talking about our faith in Jesus Christ. Fear has dominated our culture for a couple of years now, and some are like Demas, abandoning Christ in favour of their love with the present world. Perhaps you have lost friends because of that fear which destroys faith.

St. Luke

Luke, on the other hand, remains with Paul, who praises Luke's faithfulness in the face of persecution. He leans on Luke's friendship at a low point. That's the character of Luke, who was one of the earliest converts to Christianity. He spent most of his life evangelizing with Paul in Asia Minor up until the time of Paul's martyrdom in Rome.

The Book of Acts is Luke's carefully prepared account of the early Church and especially Paul's missionary journeys. His Gospel is, of course, his equally carefully researched biography on the life of Christ. The two books of Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were originally a single work. The intimate accounts contained in Luke's gospel of the early years of Christ's life (the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation) lead many scholars to believe that one of the eyewitnesses he interviewed was the Blessed Virgin Mary herself.

St. Pope John Paul II reflects that "Luke leads us to knowledge of the discreet yet penetrating light that radiates from it, while illustrating the reality and events of history." Luke 's symbol is the ox because he begins his story with the temple, the place of the sacrifice of animals. He was a Greek and a physician. He was upper class and educated. He gave up his status in society to follow Jesus. He risked his life and gave his life for that friendship with Paul, but even more with Christ.

Luke

It is also quite possible that Luke was one of the 72 whom Jesus sent out. Luke records that they were to prepare those towns for Jesus to visit. They were told to 'name drop'. The difference is that they are to give their lives in total humility to this friendship, and also to invite others to share in that friendship equally. That is also the mission of the Church and our mission as individual friends of Christ. Luke tells us to trust in that relationship. Second, he tells us to go out and prove that it is not a matter of pride to know Christ, but of humble sharing with others the Good News of the kingdom of God. The Church prepares the world for Jesus.

Call To Conversion

Anyone who uses any of the social media sites knows what the letters BFF mean. That's 'best friends forever'. It's a casual and almost trivial reference to people who might be called friends. We have this natural desire to be known as people who are friends of this person or that. For you and I, that desire is a gift to be offered back to God. Let us be friends with the psalmist who sings the praises of friendship with God. Let us be friends with Paul, who is in prison for proclaiming

the name of Jesus. Let us be friends with St. Luke, who gave up status for friendship with Christ, and who has shared it so eloquently and powerfully with us in his holy writings. Let us, above all, neither be ashamed or sinfully proud of our friendship with God in Jesus, literally our best friend forever.

Key Scripture Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings of peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation!*

Collect: *Lord God, who chose Saint Luke to reveal the mystery of your love for the poor, grant that those who already glory in your name may persevere as one heart and one soul, and that all nations may see your salvation.*

2 Timothy: *Do your best to come to me soon, Timothy, for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you. Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm. The Lord will pay him back for his deeds. He strongly opposed our message. At my first defence, no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.*

Psalms: *Your friends tell the glory of your kingship, Lord. All your faithful shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power. Your kingdom is everlasting. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

Luke: *The Lord appointed seventy and sent them on ahead in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person. But if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house. Do not move about. Eat what is set before you. Cure the sick and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"*