

Homily For Tuesday of the 2nd Week of Christmas - Year II

St Peter's 8:30AM Mass - Jan 2, 2023

(Memorial - Basil the Great & Gregory of Nazianzen)

1 Jn 2:2-28 "The antichrist is the one who denies the Father and the Son."

Ps 98:1-4 "All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of our God. Make a joyful noise."

Jn 1:19-28 "I am the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"

Of Truth and Light

Introduction

I have never been much of a fan of New Year's resolutions. After all, our New Year is the beginning of Advent, which is the period of preparation for the birth of Christ. However, I can see that, if we made at least one of our resolutions not the part of the list that usually goes by the way of most gym memberships, but something truly spiritual, that we make a top priority to follow through, there could be a great benefit. Before Christmas, and again today, we hear a great candidate for the top of that list, so let's make our number one resolution, to follow through on John's declaration to "make straight the way of the Lord" in each of our lives.

John

Today we honour the great 4th century bishops, Doctors of the Church for their contributions to our understanding of the one for whom we make a straight path. On this day, we get John the Gospel writer and John the Baptist both telling us how we can do that. John's Gospel and his first Epistle letter are reflections on Chapter one of his Gospel. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. At the very beginning of time and space and the universe, the Word was with God. That Word was God, separate from the Father, but sharing 100% in the divine nature. Without him not one thing came into being: There is no other creative power, no other God. What has come into being in him was life. He is the source of all life. He is also the light of the human race. He is our only light. There is no other light that gives understanding about what is true other than him. This light shines in

the darkness. Anything that separates us from truth is darkness. The world hates the truth, and many will end up in darkness because they reject the truth. This is hard to accept since that Word of God became flesh and lived among us, and now continues to live with us: in Sacred Scripture, in the Eucharist and in the priesthood.

In western culture, we use a fictional character, based loosely on the real life of St Nicholas, and give him the qualities of loving kindness and tell children that they can ask him for anything and he will bring it as a gift at Christmas, but only if they are good. God gives us many gifts, but they aren't the things of this world that we think will make us happy. And being good doesn't just mean not hitting your brother or sister for a couple of weeks before Christmas so you can fool Santa (your parents) long enough to get the toys you want. It means following the path of holiness, with Jesus Christ being our light and our truth.

First Letter of John

The first letter of John is a treatise on how to follow Christ more faithfully. Listen to these dogmatic statements. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Jesus is also the Son of the Father. Both are simultaneously true. You can't have one without the other.

The Apostle John, the last of the ones who had walked with Jesus after all the others had been martyred for their faith, was dealing with a problem of the truth of Jesus Christ having been perverted. John was absolutely clear that if anyone is believing something other than what had been taught about the truth of the Son of God and his mission, that they were liars and 'antichrists'.

Sts. Basil and Gregory

Both doctors of the Church were born into a time, in the 4th century, when antichrist thinking really tried to unravel Christian teaching. In the era when the Church finally became free of official persecution by the Roman government, almost immediately there was the problem of false teaching. At one point, two thirds of all the bishops of the world adhered to the heresy of Arianism, which taught that Jesus is not fully divine. The faithful bishops fought for the truth on

which John would not compromise. The Nicene Creed which we often repeat today is an unequivocal presentation of that truth of our faith.

Call To Conversion

Brothers and sisters, children of God, for that is what we are called to be and that is what we are if we accept Jesus Christ, let us recommit ourselves this very moment, to turn away from darkness and to walk in the light of the truth.

The whole Church, and therefore all its members, has the mission of bearing witness. The testimony we bring to the world has a name. Jesus Christ is the very Gospel. He is the "Good News". And the proclamation of the Gospel all over the world must also be understood as the key of the testimony uniting inseparably the announcement and the life.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *Let the peoples recount the wisdom of the saints, and let the Church proclaim their praise. Their names will live on and on.*

Collect: *O God, who was pleased to give light to your Church by the example and teaching of the bishops, Saints Basil and Gregory, grant that we may learn your truth and practise it faithfully in charity.*

1 John: *My little ones, who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then this is what he has promised us, eternal life. The anointing that you received from him abides in you, It is true and is not a lie.*

Psalm: *All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.*

John: *John's testimony, "I am not the Messiah." They asked him, "Who are you? What do you say about yourself?" John said, "I am the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Sent from the Pharisees, they asked him, "Why are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah nor Elijah?" John answered, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.*