

Homily 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Jer. 20.7-9, Rom. 12.1-2, Mt. 16.21-27

Poor St. Peter, last week in the Gospel he is the hero if you will, as Jesus says, “blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona!” (Mt. 16.17) compared to today where Jesus tells Peter “Get behind me Satan!” (Mt. 16.23). I think many of us can relate to this quick reversal of fate or identity. I know myself I have often done some things really well followed by putting my foot in my mouth shortly afterward. Yet I think we need to understand what Jesus is telling Peter in Matthew 16 so we can apply this lesson to our lives.

Jesus first asks the Apostles “who do you say I am.” This question applies to us every day, that is, who do you say Jesus is? How do you say it? The most direct way is by our actions, for God created man to love and be loved. We proclaim the Word of God by how we live our lives. We are called to walk the walk not just to speak of Jesus on Sunday and forget Him the rest of the week. We are called to live humble and charitable lives. We acknowledge Jesus through the Mass and our Sacraments. Prior to Mass as you quiet your mind and heart do you thank Jesus, thank God for the blessing of the day and week? Offer the Mass for someone in need, or for the poor souls in Purgatory.

Jesus explains to the Apostles that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer. St. Peter replies with this statement, “This shall never happen.” St. Peter is with Jesus everyday witnessing miracles probable in awe of what he is seeing. St Peter does not want this to end. St. Peter is resisting God’s revelation, God’s plan. Jesus Christ is trying to explain that redemption is through the cross, His cross. Jesus tells St. Peter “Get behind me Satan.” Jesus is telling St. Peter that he is not putting God first, rather he is putting himself first.

Karen and I have traveled a lot this summer. One of the places we stopped was Mary’s town in Libertyville Il (near Chicago). Which is a twenty-four-hour adoration chapel. Karen and I went in the late evening and what we observed was the number of people there, 20-30, of various ages, from babies to 60–70-year-olds but mainly teenagers and people in their 20’s. What amazed me was that when the majority of the people were leaving, especially the younger people, they would come to the center genuflect on both knees, and walk backwards to the door, they never took their eyes off of Jesus Christ. Reflecting upon this, I think this is what

Jesus is telling St Peter. Turn all your focus, all your trust, all your faith and all your hope on ME.

Jesus further tells the Apostles that He will suffer and that we too must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus. To become true disciples of Christ requires us to make a commitment to a loving sacrifice in the form of self-denial and a willingness to accept suffering out of love for Christ. We must trust completely in God's divine plan. Think of the words of the Our Father... "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God is calling us to allow heaven to be here on earth. Just think of all the parts and miracles within the Mass. The offering of Jesus, the consecration, the turning of the bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Through our Baptism we are called to live a holy and virtuous life. It is only through God's grace that makes it possible to live a holy and virtuous life. Jesus is calling St. Peter and all of us to offer ourselves completely and totally to Him. We must follow the will of God and trust in His divine plan for us.

We all have times like St Peter where we take our eyes off God. Jesus explains that He must suffer, suffer for us! So too will we suffer and fall and when we fall, we must get back on course through the use of our sacraments. Set our hearts, minds, and souls in union with God through the Sacrament of Confession. Through the Mass and reception of the Holy Eucharist we receive supernatural graces to have the strength to carry our cross. We can keep our eyes and our hearts focused on God through Eucharistic Adoration. Spending an extra hour or whatever time you may have during the week with Jesus before Jesus. Let us follow Jesus with our whole heart, mind, body, and soul. God gives us the graces to follow Him, we must accept the graces and be nourished by Him. Lord, may we follow you, Lord may we see you in everyone we meet, Lord may we never take our eyes off of you, we pray to be humble and charitable but most of all we pray that thy will be done.