

## 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

There was a simple man who was travelling in another country. He went to the train station to purchase a ticket. The only thing he understood for certain was that he got a return ticket. Everything else seemed right but he wasn't completely sure. As he boarded the train, he took out his rosary and prayed that Mary would look after the details. He took his seat across from a couple. After awhile he noticed that they spoke his language. He asked the man, "Sir, do you know where I am going?" and showed them his ticket. The man looked down at his rosary and said, "You are going to hell for worshiping Mary." The traveller smiled brightly. The man looked at him and said, "Going to hell is no smiling matter." The traveller replied, "I know going to hell is no smiling matter but I am smiling because I have a return ticket."

*Man of God. As for you man of God.* This is a beautiful phrase. How would you and I take it if someone was to call us man or woman of God? Is it even possible for someone to associate us with being a person of God? Why would anyone want to be a person of God or godly?

Let us say that you and I pursued being a financial advisor and we were really good at it and we were able to help people have lots of money. We would probably have many people who would seek us out. But what would we really have accomplished - would anyone get to Heaven because of our financial advice? We could help them live comfortably for their earthly life but would we have set them up for the retirement that lasts forever?

I was thinking about the band the Beatles. I know I might be dating myself but you can think of any entertainer and ponder how many people do you think they helped get to Heaven. What was their ultimate achievement? Or famous sports players. How many people were brought to Heaven by Gordy Howe or Pele the great Brazilian soccer player or any great athlete? At the end of the day what did their fame do? We know that some do use their fame to do great and holy things but this is because they are a person of God first.

In the Gospel, we have this dilemma of the two persons. One who Jesus doesn't even mention by name because he is blotted out of the book of life. His life has only blessing in this life and is a curse in eternal life. He the rich man and at the end of his life he will only receive punishment and will receive more punishment because it seems that he also drew his brothers to hell as well. We know that there is no charity in hell so the only reason the man in hell does not want his brothers to go there as well is that it will increase our torment there if we helped or contributed to another soul going to hell. The rich man was not a man of God, was not godly, and received his reward in this life and none in the eternal life. Lazarus was a godly man and received punishment for his sin in this life and reward forever in Heaven.

It seems to me that the ultimate way to live your life is to be a godly person who helps other souls to come to Heaven. What a glorious thing it will be if we get there and get to see the other souls we helped arrive there through our example and prayers. Our joy will be increased because our capacity to love is increased.

How can we live a godly way of life? It is very hard if we only have the world blaring in our ear its lies and promises and enticements. How could we possibly even know what godliness is if

we don't have a direct connection and experience of God in our life? We will only hear a watered down version of the truth, a disordered way that invites us to seek pleasure above all else. In contrast, our Lord invites us to love radically, to lay down our life, to sacrifice and be to the world an image of God. We know that mere religion and religious practices don't bring that about because this parable is to the Pharisees, the religious people of the time.

I am sure that we would all like to think that the warnings given to the Pharisees are not for us but my brothers and sisters they are directed personally at us, myself included. If we do not know God, do not listen to God, do not hear His voice and love His commandments, then yes these are for us. And we should be thankful for them so that you and I don't perish in the deception and think that what we are doing is enough. We must all go deeper. We must pray for that desire to be a godly person. We must say to the Lord, "Lord, teach me your voice. I want to know how to follow you, to love you more, Lord." A person who is not working to fall in love is falling out of love.

One time a kid said to me that he knew enough about faith already. I think now that he knew nothing of faith. That would be like a husband saying, "I don't need to learn more about my wife. I know everything there is to know." How wrong is he and how dead is his love.

They say that this is one of the greatest problems of our Catholic faith, that many learned about it without ever being converted. We were catechized without ever being evangelized. We never fell in love with God because we never knew how much He loved us. Many think that salvation is a knowledge based subject.

Fear not my brothers and sisters because we can start being godly people today. We can let the Good News set our heart ablaze. We can pray today, "Lord, help me desire to be a godly person. I want to hear the Good News." These are powerful prayers that God is waiting for us to make. This prayer gets us ready to travel to the place where there is no return ticket. Stay holy my friends.