

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

I was struck by the Gospel and the words of the Pharisee today, how he stood before the Lord without the need of salvation. He was good on his own, yet our Lord says he is not justified. Justified meaning saved, meaning that he is not on the road to Heaven. He seems to be better than most people, yet our Lord does not say that he is good enough.

I was thinking how much is that like my attitude when I come before the Lord? I come not like the tax collector "*Lord, if you don't save me I am hopeless,*" but more like, "*It is nice to be here and I am glad that things are pretty good, but I don't really need your grace, Lord, I am good.*" My very attitude that I don't see Mass as a desperate affair means to me that I am like the Pharisee. I heard there is a book out there called, "Why Catholics Cannot Sing." I haven't read it but I assume it is for a few reasons. Firstly, that we feel we have nothing to sing about because we feel we already possess it and secondly, we aren't in love with God or experience His love so why be happy?

When we think about it, if we don't see our need for the grace of God in our lives and we don't use grace, why would we want to invite others?

I was thinking about our world today and we have a lot of emphasis on the environment and saving the environment. We are all called to the salvation of the world, *save the planet*. Yet in my reading of the Bible, I never read anything about the environment being needed for salvation or Jesus charging someone with the sin of pollution. Yet the sacred Scriptures are full of telling us to save our souls and we rarely hear about it. I am not saying that we should not have some concern for our planet and universe, but it will pass away and our souls will not pass away. Our souls will all go on in glory or in suffering.

I like Gospels like this because they remind me of my need to convert and to trust in God for that conversion. If I don't think this Mass is necessary for salvation then I am not thinking as God does and my soul is clouded. Why do we need the Mass, the Sacraments? Because they bring grace into our lives. Why do we need grace in our lives? Because without it we don't have the strength to live our lives as God has commanded us to.

So let us look at the Sacraments and our calling. When I look at what I am called to, I know I cannot do it on my own. Let us look at evangelization. Who is called to evangelize? All of us. Who feels called to evangelize? So therefore we know we need to accept more grace. We need to spend more time with Jesus so others will be saved as well. I know I am too much of a chicken on my own to share the Good News yet God still calls us to it and so we must pray for grace.

When we think that we are okay on our own, that we haven't sinned and don't need Confession, we have been overcome with a lie that will destroy our poor soul. The tax collector knew he needed God. In what ways do you and I feel we need God? Look at our call. I love the beautiful vocation of Marriage. *I, so and so, take you, so and so, to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.* How are you doing with that promise? You promised that even when you are sick you will show respect and love and honour, not some of the days of your life but all the days of your

life. It is impossible for you to do this on your own. It is only by asking for grace can you keep this promise. I am not surprised that many people do not want to get married because they have not witnessed it lived with grace, only nature.

I am not surprised that many men do not want to become priests because we, too, have not used the grace to live our priestly lives supernaturally. We have not been an overly obedient group of priests it seems. I did not promise obedience as long as my bishop agrees with me. I promised to trust that God works through my bishop, especially when he doesn't agree with me. I can only be disobedient if he commands me to sin, which has not happened so far. Is it easy to be obedient? No, it is not, it is impossible actually. The only times I have been successful is when my bishop did not command anything and when I prayed for grace. I am too sinful on my own, too full of pride.

I think the same can be said for Mass. Our young people don't go to Mass because they haven't seen it change us, yet it is meant to. It is meant to give us the power to live our lives supernaturally and powerfully routing out vices and loving with new passion. We are called on not to even waste time, to not gossip, to think well of others, to trust that God has things figured out. That takes grace my brothers and sisters and without it we cannot get to Heaven. We have a desire for super powers because super powers are available to us through the Sacraments, when we use them. Try this today: God is giving you grace. Think of some vice in your life and put grace towards it each day. In the evening, examine how it went and pray again for it. In the morning, pray again. You will see how powerful grace is. It is ground breaking and life changing, super charging.