

Our Lady of Lourdes

February 14, 2010

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 17:5-8

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Luke 6:17, 20-26

Deacon Bob

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I would expect that no one in this Church would disagree with what I have just said. The next question that might be asked is how does God love me? Do we realize that he loves each one of us in ways that are some times difficult for our human minds to comprehend? The question that is sometimes asked is If God loves me so much if he loves us so much why did I lose my job? Or why did I get cancer? Or why did someone I love die? Why do the people in Haiti have to suffer so? Of course the reality is that these things are a part of our human condition. Our God is a loving and merciful God who does not punish us or test us with these things. He is a God who is with us in all things both good and bad.

God who loves us wants a relationship with each of us. He wants a personal and close friendship with us. This is what the prophet Jeremiah speaks about in the first reading today. He tells us those who trust in the Lord, who hope in the Lord, are like a tree that stretches out its roots to the stream. In what ways do I plant myself by the stream of God's grace? How do I build my relationship with God? Do I do it through prayer? Do I will I take the time each day to communicate with God through prayer. In marriage and in any friendship we know communication is one of the most important things.

As we build relationship we build trust and hope. Our relationship with God is no different. Only trust and hope in God is where we will find true happiness. All that the world can offer us is empty and temporary without God but with hope and trust in God we will flourish like a tree planted near running water, which flourishes even in time of adversity.

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I would expect that no one in this Church would disagree with what I have just said. The next question that might be asked is how does God love me? Do we realize that he loves each one of us in ways that are some times difficult for our human minds to comprehend? The question that is sometimes asked is If God loves me so much if he loves us so much why did I lose my job? Or why did I get cancer? Or why did someone I love die? Why do the people in Haiti have to suffer so? Of course the reality is that these things are a part of our human condition. Our God is a loving and merciful God who does not punish us or test us with these things. He is a God who is with us in all things both good and bad.

God who loves us wants a relationship with each of us. He wants a personal and close friendship with us. This is what the prophet Jeremiah speaks about in the first reading today. He tells us those who trust in the Lord, who hope in the Lord, are like a tree that stretches out its roots to the stream. In what ways do I plant myself by the stream of God's grace? How do I build my relationship with God? Do I do it through prayer? Do I will I take the time each day to communicate with God through prayer. In marriage and in any friendship we know communication is one of the most important things.

As we build relationship we build trust and hope. Our relationship with God is no different. Only trust and hope in God is where we will find true happiness. All that the world can offer us is empty and temporary without God but with hope and trust in God we will flourish like a tree planted near running water, which flourishes even in time of adversity.

In the gospel today did you notice that Jesus came down with the twelve? He had a just selected them as his apostles and now who joins them on level ground. We might look at this as him saying to them and to us I want to be with you where you are I want to be with you where you live. But listen carefully to the message in the gospel today. The kingdom of this world which we know well is very different than the kingdom of God. Jesus came to show us what the kingdom of God is like, to tell us what to expect.

Luke presents a strong emphasis throughout his gospel on the great reversal that the Kingdom of God brings. Luke's version of the beatitudes are shorter than what we hear in Matthew's gospel and Luke also gives us the other side of the blessings, he tells us of the woes. We hear "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven." We also hear "Woe to you who are rich for you have already received your consolation."

Who are the poor? Certainly they are the financially impoverished people but also other disadvantaged people, powerless people, marginalized people, they are those imprisoned as we heard before Mass today. It is clear God has a preference for the poor, the hungry, the grieving for the vulnerable person.

Why would Jesus say "Woe to those who are rich?" What's wrong with being rich? There are rich people who are very generous who live very good lives and there are those who don't. It is not so much about the state we find ourselves in but our attitude. When we find ourselves secure and comfortable we can become confident in ourselves, we can insulate ourselves from the needs of others and from the claims of God.

In his book, the "Wonder of It All" Bryan Chapell tells about Lawrence an African student who was preaching his first sermon in preaching class. He was describing the joys Christians will experience when Jesus ushers us into our heavenly home. He said, "I've been in this country for several months now. I've seen the great wealth that is here, the fine homes and cars and clothes. I've listened to many sermons in churches here, too. But I've yet to hear one sermon about heaven. Because everyone has so much in this country no one preaches about heaven. People here don't seem to need it. In my country most people have very little, so we preach on heaven all the time. We know how much we need it."

On this day we reflect on love and relationships especially with God. We are warned that the relationship comes with a cost; if we try to do what God wants us to do we will sometimes find ourselves in trouble but it also is the only way to true joy and peace. As Lent begins this week it is a good time to assess our relationship with God. How are we doing with sharing God's love with others especially those in need? How are you and I doing bringing about the Kingdom of God?

Our Lady of Lourdes

February 14, 2010

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 17:5-8

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Luke 6:17, 20-26

Deacon Bob

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