

Homily of 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time of Year A

Builders construct and mount solid pillars made of rods in corners of buildings to make buildings strong and firm. The higher the quality of rods, the stronger and firmer the building. There were no rods before and during the time of Jesus. Builders at that time used stones to form pillars for buildings. Also, not every stone was suitable for formation of pillars. Special kinds of stones were used. The rejection of Jesus by the chief priests and the elders led Jesus to give the parable of the landowner and the wicked servants. Jesus concluded the parable with a quotation from Psalm 118:22, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Jesus was referring to himself as the special stone which was rejected by the chief priests and the elders, but has become the cornerstone. This parable and other parables of Jesus infuriated and enraged the chief priests and the elders. They conspired against him and had him crucified.

Collapse of buildings is common in Nigeria. The main reason is that builders of the collapsed buildings, for selfish reasons, used low quality rods for constructing the pillars of the buildings instead of high quality rods. We will be reflecting on various collapses in our world because God and Jesus are rejected.

We are going through the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey, but since we have Jesus as our cornerstone we have not collapsed and will not collapse. We will rebuild around Jesus the cornerstone. He will hold us together again. We will only have major problems if our faith collapses. If our faith remains intact we will overcome. Jesus is our rock. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, fire, rains, floods and winds will come and go, but we will remain, because we are set solidly on Jesus the rock (Cf. Matthew 7:25).

After God created human being the Bible says, "God looked at everything he had made and found it very good" (Genesis 1:31). The world's rejection of God is captured by Prophet Isaiah's parable in the first reading: "My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside; he spaded it, cleared it of stones and planted the choicest vines; within it he built a watchtower, and hewed out a wine press. Then he looked for the crop of grapes, but what it yielded was wild grapes." God gave human being the beautiful world, and gave human being the authority to subdue everything in the world. Then, human being turns round and rejects God. God is removed from politics, administration, judiciary, economy, business, science and technology, morality, education, mass media, medicine, family, and from some religious practices. I mention religious practices because there are people who worship Satan, and their belief system is called Satanism. Reference to God and to Jesus has become offensive to many people. The chaos and violence in many parts of the world today is as a result of the rejection of God and the rejection of Jesus.

People spend time and money looking for why there is high rate of crime and violence nowadays. The main reason is that God and Jesus are rejected. Enquiries are being made to determine the motive behind the mass murder in Las Vegas. It is clear to me that what happened were a clear sign and as a result of rejection of God. Where is God and God's word in the life of the murderer? None. All we hear are number many guns, girl friends, cruises, gambings, wealth, and so on. Some important spiritual questions are not asked.

Nature abhors vacuum. When God is removed, someone else takes over, and that someone is the Evil One. The Las Vegas murderer may soon be labeled as disturbed and mentally ill. But from the spiritual perspective, it is a case of evil possession. A mentally ill person is not able to, meticulously, plan and execute such horrible act. It is by the power of Satan that such an evil act can be done.

Any place, government, country, religion, establishment, family or individual where God and Jesus are removed, the Evil One takes over. Do not listen to anyone who questions the reason for your faith or who tries to discourage you. Such a person is misguided. St. Peter encourages us to be firm in faith (1 Peter 5:9). The life of a person rooted in God is different from the life of a person who rejects God. In time of crises, for a person who rejects God, Satan directs the person to evil acts. In time of crises, for a person who has faith in God, God directs the person in such a way that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard the person's heart and mind in Christ Jesus (see second reading). That is how it goes for leaders and rulers, families, organizations, churches, countries and so on. Let God and Jesus continue to be our pillar and cornerstone. Let us affirm with St. Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

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