

Homily of Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 2025

Wisdom 18:6-9; Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-22; Hebrew 11:1-2, 8-19; Luke 12:32-48

The first reading calls our attention to the Jews who put their trust in “sure knowledge of oaths” between God and their ancestors and for this, they remained steadfast in their faith in God. God made oaths to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, promising them and their descendants the land of Canaan. God made oaths to those who obeyed his laws and commandments, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” The first reading reveals that at various times of persecution, the faithful continued to worship God in secret. The first reading says, “For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.”

In the same manner, the Catholic Church has survived various periods of persecution due to the secret religious practices of the faithful. There are powerful stories about Ireland, Japan, China, and other places of how the Catholic Church survived persecution for centuries due to the perseverance of Catholics who performed religious practices in hiding. Sometimes, they are called underground churches. The message of the first reading is a challenge to us as individuals and to our generation in general.

Two Sundays ago, we reflected on Abraham’s hospitality. Last Sunday, we reflected on his life of prayer. Today, the second reading invites us to reflect on his faith in God. We read, “**By faith** Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. **By faith** he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents ... **By faith** he received power to generate, even though he was past the normal age - and Sarah herself was sterile - for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy. ... **By faith** Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac...” What a man of faith, which why he is called “father of faith.”

Soren Kierkegaard uses the phrase, “leap of faith” to describe a decision or belief that is made without logical or rational justification. The “leap of faith” Abraham took in each of the situations narrated in the second reading is amazing. They are a challenge to us as individual and to our generation in general. Abraham’s faithfulness and the faithfulness of our ancestors encourage us to have unwavering faith in God in all circumstances. St. Paul says, “We Walk by faith not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). He also says, “In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Ephesians 6:16). The Book of Hebrews 11:6 writes, “...without faith it is impossible to please him.”

However, St. James tells us that faith alone is not enough. Good works must accompany it. He asks, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” St. James concludes, “Faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:14 & 16). Good works are actions motivated by love of God and love of human beings. If we who are of little faith also lack good works, of what benefit is that to us? St. John emphasizes the love of human

being where he states, “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20).

We were reminded last Sunday that we are all sojourners on earth whose real citizenship is in heaven. The reminder continues today as Jesus encourages us that God “is pleased to give us the kingdom.” Therefore, we are to work towards having “inexhaustible treasures in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.” Jesus adds, “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” Which means, we are not to put our hearts here on earth which offers us only transient worldly treasures. Rather, we are to put our hearts on the Kingdom of God where our eternal treasures are.

Jesus says in John 14:1-3, “... And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.” He tells us in today’s gospel to be faithful and prudent stewards who await their master’s return, ready to open immediately he knocks. Faithful and prudent servants are those build eternal treasures with love of God and faith in God, and with love of human beings and good works.

My God give us the graces we need to build eternal treasures. Amen.

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