

Second Sun Lent C

To Be Godlike

Introduction

This is the Second Sunday of the Season of Lent.

Lent is a wonderful time of preparation for the celebration of the most sacred time of year... Holy Week.

During Lent the catechumens prepare for their reception into our Church. During Lent all of us Catholics examine our lives and ask ourselves... "How am I doing?"

Lent is the time when we prepare for renewing our own baptismal vows at the Easter Vigil, or on Easter Sunday.

The Sunday Scriptures help us to ask the right questions as we examine our journey with the Lord.

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

I The Ways of the World

Paul in the Second Reading warns his beloved community at Philippi:

... Many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction.

Their God is their stomach.

Their glory is in their "shame."

Their minds are occupied with earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven.

What can St. Paul possibly mean by that warning?

In our society we seem to be taught that our worth is largely determined by external factors:

- What we own or what we earn determines our worthwhileness.
- What we produce, how we perform, our productivity determines our worth.
- Buying more and more stuff promises to bring us happiness and fulfillment.
- Pressures of work and the lure of distraction restrict our time for each other, even those closest to us.

- At times we chase after “celebrities” as if they were models of what our humanity is all about... beauty, talent, money, power, sex...

Is this what following Jesus is all about?
I’m not saying that all of these things are evil...
but are they what life is all about... these ways of the world?

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

Life is not just about work, productivity, and efficiency...
Life is not just about earning and acquiring, buying more now and enjoying it less...
An ipod will not make you happy... trust me!
If you’re miserable before you have an ipod, you’ll be miserable after you have an ipod –
but now you’ll have tunes to accompany your misery.
Don’t get me wrong... ipods are ok...
If you get a sudden guilty conscience because you own an ipod,
see me after Mass and I’ll help you assuage your guilt!
The real question is, do we really think buying more and newer “stuff” will bring us happiness and fulfillment?
Is that what life is all about?

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

II Our God Speaks

In today’s Scripture readings we encounter something very strange... God speaks!

God calls Abraham and promises Abraham that God will make of his progeny a special people who are to listen to God and be obedient to God... walk in the ways of God.

In today’s Gospel the same strange happening occurs:
God speaks... this time out of a cloud.
Its is both frightening and enlightening,
for God tells Jesus’ apostles that Jesus is God’s chosen,
beloved Son...
then God tells the apostles to “listen to Jesus!”

Sometimes I hear people say that they have spirituality and they really don't need religion.

Sometimes I ask them...

tell me about your god.

What is your god like?

Does your god ever speak to you?

Does your god ever make demands of you?

How do you pray – lift up your mind and heart to your god?

How does your god want you to act on your journey of life...

Funny thing about religion... it's not just about our relationship with God...

it's about how we live our lives...

how we behave on our journey.

That's what Jesus tells us.

How did Jesus act? What was the teaching of Jesus?

Our God demands of us... listen to Him.

Jesus is the human face of our God.

Jesus also assures us that God reaches out graciously to heal and strengthen us to walk in God's ways.

Our religion is about our transformation...

we are slowly and beautifully transformed into other Christs,

if we follow Jesus and walk in God's ways...

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

A Story... The Hands of Christ

During the Second World War after the D Day invasion of France the American soldiers liberated a small French village on their way through France. After the fighting the villagers came out into the village square to discover that the fighting had scarred their beautiful life sized statue of Jesus. It was covered with dirt, and had several bullet holes, along with other scratches. Worst of all, both of the hands of Christ had been blown off.

Some of the villagers suggested that they get a new statue.

Others suggested that they clean up the statue, but leave the bullet holes and the scars as a reminder of their blessed liberation. But they wanted to get a sculptor to make two new hands for the statue.

A third group suggested they clean up the statue and keep it as a reminder, but that they put no new hands on the statue. To this day the life sized, scared statue of Jesus stands in the village square, with no hands. Below it is a plaque, which reads, "We are the hands of Christ."

Are you Jesus? Are you Christ-like?

Who else can bring Jesus to our world...
his teaching, his compassion, his care and love,
his reaching out to those in need...
who else but us, his disciples...
those who "listen to him."
St. Paul tells us to "put on Christ."
And again, "Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus." (Phil 2)

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

Lent is a good time to take stock.
How are we doing?
Am I becoming more Christ like?
Am I walking in God's ways?
How do I need God's help to do this>
Is there anything I need to change?
Have I asked God's help with this?

During this Lent we once again realize
that life is about relationships, family, and friends...
Compassion, care and forgiveness...
Helping those in need, in any way we can...
one person at a time...

We could ask ourselves..."Do I really need all the "stuff" I have?
Maybe there is something I can give away!
Maybe I can fast from too much food, drink, TV or shopping!
Maybe I can pray a little more each day, beginning each day with a morning offering – hint...
put a small piece of paper on the mirror where you brush your teeth in the morning...
on the sheet of paper write, "Morning Offering."
It will remind you to say to our loving God each morning,

"Good morning God... thank you for this new day. help me to walk in your ways this day... bless me and my family. Amen." Keep it simple.

This reminds me of the person who one day prayed:

God, so far today I've been good. I haven't been resentful or angry, I haven't lied or cheated, I haven't been rude or unforgiving. Pretty soon I'm going to get out of bed this morning. I'll need your help then! Amen.

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

Deep down in each of us God's grace is working to help transform us into other Christ's...

to be people of compassion, understanding and care...

We all need to be transformed... That's what Lent is all about.

And so we pray..

Response... Have Mercy O Lord...

Conclusion

As we continue with this Mass,

at the Offertory let's offer ourselves to our Loving Father, with Christ...

As we continue with the Mass, we remember Christ's love for us, poured out on the Cross...

At communion time let's invite Christ into our hearts,

To continue his work of Transformation,

Forming us into other Christs in our world today.

Our Lenten Mission will continue to reflect on what this means for each of us on our life's Journey.

Join us for morning Mass, and for the evening Services...

For Lent is a time of Transformation.

That's what Lent is all about.

At Easter time we will renew our Baptismal vows... our promises to live like Christ in our world.

