

6.19.20 11 OT Friday 2020  
MT 6:19-23

Every priest, when he is ordained, makes a promise to be faithful to his office, which is comprised of prayers four times a day: morning, daytime, evening, and night. The office is comprised of psalms, readings and petitions, as well as a homily. Since today's gospel is about light, I thought I would read to you a homily written by St. Gregory the Great in the late fifth century:

Since the daybreak or the dawn is changed gradually from darkness into light, the Church, which comprises the elect, is fittingly styled daybreak or dawn. While she is being led from the night of infidelity to the light of faith, she is opened gradually to the splendor of heavenly brightness, just as dawn yields to the day after darkness. The Song of Songs says aptly: *Who is this who moves forward like the advancing dawn?* Holy Church, inasmuch as she keeps searching for the rewards of eternal life, has been called the dawn. While she turns her back on the darkness of sins, she begins to shine with the light of righteousness.

This reference to the dawn conjures up a still more subtle consideration. The dawn intimates that the night is over; it does not yet proclaim the full light of day. While it dispels the darkness and welcomes the light, it holds both of them, the one mixed with the other, as it were. Are not all of us who follow the truth in this life daybreak and dawn? While we do some things which already belong to the light, we are not free from the remnants of darkness. In Scripture the Prophet says to God: *No living being will be justified in your sight.* Scripture also says: *In many ways all of us give offense.*

When he writes, *the night is passed.* Paul does not add, the day is come, but rather, *the day is at hand.* Since he argues that after the night has passed, the day as yet is not come but is rather at hand, he shows that the period before full daylight and after darkness is without doubt the dawn, and that he himself is living in that period.

It will be fully day for the Church of the elect when she is no longer darkened by the shadow of sin. It will be fully day for her when she shines with the perfect brilliance of interior light. This dawn is aptly shown to be an ongoing process when Scripture says: *And you showed the dawn its place.* A thing which is shown its place is certainly called from one place to

another. What is the place of the dawn but the perfect clearness of eternal vision? When the dawn has been brought there, it will retain nothing belonging to the darkness of night. When the Psalmist writes: *My soul thirsts for the living God; when shall I go and see the face of God?*, does he not refer to the effort made by the dawn to reach its place? Paul was hastening to the place which he knew the dawn would reach when he said he wished to die and to be with Christ. He expressed the same idea when he said: *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

We are all living through a period of prolonged imperfection in this pandemic. We hold it in common. And more than likely, each of us has lived through our own individual periods of prolonged imperfection. For me, it was a prolonged bout with depression. You name yours. At this Mass, offered a few hours after dawn, let us be ever mindful we live in the dawn, after the night of darkness, in a state of prolonged imperfection, yet before the full light of day, which will be in heaven.