

Homily for Sunday Mass
August 18, 2019
Year C – Luke 12:49-53
----Father Michael Grant George Cadotte----

Our readings today bring up strong images of difficulty, persecution, strife, and divisiveness. When I thought on those topics my mind went to a Biblical period of extreme crisis – the great flood and Noah’s ark. So, in light of that here are my Top 10 Lessons we can Learned from Noah's ark story:

- Lesson 1: Don't miss the boat.
- Lesson 2: Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- Lesson 3: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- Lesson 4: Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
- Lesson 5: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- Lesson 6: Build your future on high ground.
- Lesson 7: For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- Lesson 8: When you're stressed, float a while.
- Lesson 9: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- Lesson 10: No matter the storm, when with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.^[1]

Despite the light-hearted nature of those life lesson gems they have some valid meaning for us and more importantly they speak to a way we should live our lives – with an attitude of hope, preparedness, fortitude to continue on despite what life or those we know and love might say.

Have you ever considered why we idolize visionary inventors and people of great success? I say it is because they had the fortitude, and down right tenacity, to live their vision (their belief) despite the most certain whirlwind of nay-sayers around them. It’s extremely easy to say, “it won’t work,” or “you’re not thinking right on that,” or “get your head out of the clouds, that will never work!” Those are the comments from the crowd, but the successful person rises above them and stays their course. I suppose there is a trick in all of this as some advice is truly good and should be valued but finding it amongst to storm of cynicism can be a true talent.

We all find stress points in our lives: failing health or that of a loved one, financial challenges, marital difficulties, workplace issues, the political mess of our current times all produce pressures in our lives. As we approach the end of summer break, think about,

the young people...who will be in middle school, high school and college next week. Those who refuse to go along with the drinking and drugs, those who refuse to bully others, those who refuse to let others take advantage of them physically, will be given some sort of nasty label. Life would be much easier for them to go along with the crowd. But being rooted in the Lord demands that they be something different, ^[2]

something better. So I feel we can agree that life can be harsh, if not down right nasty, but looking to our second reading today (Hebrews 12: 1-4) we draw comfort in the words to, “...persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus” (Heb 12:1-2). Jesus knew all too well that life is going to be hard, and when you add faith into it then hold on – it can get even harder! “Consider how Jesus endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb 12:3).

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This gets us to the core of our Gospel reading today (Luke 12:49-53) with Jesus talking in such harsh and dark terms of people being divided. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, families torn down the middle, it all seems as opposite of the words we come to associate with Jesus. But they are words of love, words to prepare us for the truth that a dedication to our faith, and the principles we must follow and live, will bring us face-to-face with opposition within society and even within our own families. Jesus knew the Holy Spirit will light the hearts of many on fire and equally scare many others that will rise in opposition. It's the ultimate test for us to hold firm to our faith, to what is morally right in these times. Msgr. Harry shared a Facebook post that nails this, "Whenever one person stands up and says: "Wait a second. This is Wrong." It helps other people to do the same" ^(unknown). When we hold firm, we not only honor our faith and moral convictions, but we help lift others out of the muck of the pits they find themselves in and back up into the light.

Friends, in the ever-growing secularism of our society, we can find ourselves under attack for our beliefs. For expressing our faith in prayer over a meal, a cross we wear around our neck, or simply living our lives in a manner that is in alignment with Jesus Christ. I pray that you don't take the taunts of the crowds around you to heart and that you never give up. I pray you take strength from the knowledge of the struggle Jesus endured in his ministry and passion for your personal salvation. I pray you live your Gospel values in full view of the world knowing they will bring judgement against you. I pray you let the same fire of the Holy Spirit that Jesus prayed would, "...set the earth on fire..." ^(LK 12:49) set your hearts on fire for the love of Jesus. And if that love is true and authentic then it becomes the love of all of God's creation. Love of the earth and its protection. Love of yourself – as you are a most perfect creation of God and loved wholly by God AS-YOU-ARE. Love of all persons regardless of how you or society views them. Love of the immigrant and persecuted persons looking for safety and better lives. Love of the sick, needy, and poor. This is the fire that should burn in us all. This is the fire that others will push up against. This is the fire that purifies us and brings us into full union with our Lord and Savior.

AMEN

---Citations---

The New American Bible: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010

ISBN 9780529064844

[1] <https://www.atimetolaugh.org/noahsark.html>. 17 August 2019

[2] O'Neil, Deacon Russ. Volume2 Digest, Vol 65, Issue 4