

Homily for Sunday Mass
August 30, 2020
Year A – Matthew 16:21-27
----Father Michael Grant George Cadotte----

In today's Gospel reading [MT 16:21-27] Jesus accuses Peter of thinking like a human and not as God would, "...you are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do..." (MT 16:23) he said. Take that heart friends and truly meditate on how often you think as a human being rather than think as God would. For me the answer is sadly all too often and there lies an opportunity for us all from today's Word of God.

And what if we do not like what thinking like God does in our lives; after all, it can be most inconvenient and troubling. The Prophet Jeremiah in our first reading [Jer 20:7-9] was having this very argument with God. He had had it with always having to give prophesy of what people saw as utter doom and gloom and he was widely mocked and abused for it but when he tried to hold in what God wanted him to expel in prophesy he would grow, "...weary holding it in...[and could not] endure it..." (Jer 20:9). St. Francis of Assisi had a moments similar and recalled about his later youth showing off to his parents, his expensive custom made armor and chain mail as he prepared to go and join the Papal Army. He reflected on this and talked of how later he, "...began the shedding of armor and mail, and it literally took years to shed the last of that confining metal and emerge a free man of flesh and spirit" (Bodo, p.132). This amazing saint lived the Gospels and had a profound effect on countless people through the centuries in their quest to expand upon their Catholic spirituality. St. Francis often felt the closest to God when he would retreat to the mountain caves above Assisi in the cold dampness of the rocks and soil. In other words, when he removed the distractions and lures of life and surrounded himself only with creation did, he find the energy to continue what he called his Dream, to journey with Jesus as a poor and humble man. Like Jeremiah, St. Francis could not simply turn from God, he felt a pulling need to go back to basics and to sojourn with his Savior even more deeply.

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These great men did what St. Paul is urging us to do in his letter to the Romans in our second reading [Rom 12:1-2]. He urges us all...

...by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, **that you may discern** what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Now, does this mean you become a hermit, monk, or nun? Maybe and maybe not, but what I do ask you to earnestly consider is how you currently live your life and how you view those around you – not your immediate family and friends, but the *others* in life; and ask yourself is there a more Godly way to live? Is there too much human life in our spiritual life? Is my walk with God my primary journey or just a weekly excursion I take on Sundays? Do spend time with these questions and formulate actions based on your answers and do not just ask these questions once but continuously ask yourself throughout your life. Even St. Francis, as great a man and saint as he was, was always looking to his brothers, to nature, and of course God, to help him improve, re-affirm, and to motivate so he could carry on his Gospel living.

And not only do I ask you to pray, meditate, and reflect on all of that, but I also ask that you look for ways to help your sisters and brothers in faith to do the same. We are each other's keepers and our Gospel reading today proves this perfectly. When Jesus reveals what is to become of him in Jerusalem Peter immediately runs to his rescue and demands it not to be so. Jesus' response was harsh yelling to Peter, "...get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me..." (MT 16:23). You see, Peter was imposing *his* human life on to Jesus' *spiritual* life. Take heed to not be a Peter with those you encounter and derail them from their spiritual path and do not allow others to do this of you. Think as God does, as Jesus does and not as a human being does. You know the faith and you know the call; it is now time to execute this knowledge in new ways to advance your life and further develop your spiritual life. God is asking this of you in

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those whispers I have talked about in recent homilies and in the case of this morning, in my big loudmouth – our Lord uses many means to get our attention.

Now I cannot tell you what your spiritual path should be, that is for God to instruct you, but my dear ones, I will do everything I can to support you in that journey. I pray you take time to discern what that journey is now, and where it needs to be heading and deeply commit to it.

Commitment: The chicken and the pig were walking past the church one day and discussing the problems of world hunger. The chicken suggested that between her species and the pig's they could provide everyone in the world with a good breakfast of bacon and eggs every morning. The pig thought long and hard before replying, 'That's OK for you to say, because from you that's only a contribution - from me that's total commitment!'

Let us not be chickens about searching for and answering God's call to us individually. May each of you give that total commitment to God as well as a total commitment to support your neighbor in their spirituality as well.

AMEN.

---Citations---

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