

Homily Notes August 30, 2020

Two statements in today's readings really struck me especially as I look to what is happening in our country and our world today. Saint Paul says: "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." And Jesus says to Peter: "'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me.

You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Saint Paul warns us not to be conformed to this age. This is an age of cancel culture, extreme political correctness, bullying and yes, in some places mob rule. Some fear to speak what they believe for fear of retribution. FEAR. Could you imagine going out to dinner with family and friends, hoping for a nice evening. You are dining outside, and all of a sudden, a group of bullies comes and tells you that you must raise your fist and recite their slogan. This really happened recently. And only one woman stood her ground. They surrounded her, threatened her, cursed her, and yet she would not defy her beliefs. What would you have done? What if the crowd came to you and asked you to raise your fist and deny Christ? What would you have done? It's so easy to get confused. Even our beloved Peter was thinking as the world thinks and not as God does. Over 6 Catholic churches have been destroyed. I don't have a number on how many other houses of Christian worship have been attacked. Saints statues have been behead or smashed, Stained glass window have been shattered. This is the world we now live in.

Living out our faith is going to get harder and harder. What must we do? First, we have to admit that we are in a spiritual battle for souls. An army just doesn't go out to do battle. It trains first. And so must we. We must strengthen ourselves spiritually. We must truly bond ourselves to Christ. He is our Rock. Secondly, we must listen to and rely on the Holy Spirit. We hear His voice in the silence of our hearts, and it the reading of Scriptures. That is how we are going to discern the will of God in our lives. Third, we have to be ready to testify to our faith. This is how we will be ready to answer for our faith when the bullies come. We have to be.

Jesus knew times such as these would be coming. They have happened many times through the ages. That is why he told us we must take up our cross each day and follow him. It's not always easy. But taking up our cross each day truly strengthens us. It prepares us for the attacks that may come.

We Christians are truly being challenged not to think not as human beings do but called to discern the will of God. The days ahead may look dark. But no matter what happens, the Lord will always be at our side.

Remember the words of Psalm 27: The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid?