

September 10, 2017

In the Middle Ages, a monk was going into the forest, following a path, when all of a sudden, around the corner, came a knight on a beautiful horse. The monk was so taken with how beautiful the horse was, he almost couldn't take his eyes off the horse. The knight, talking to him finally realized that's what was going on. So he said, "Brother monk, if you can say one Our Father without becoming distracted, I will give you my horse." So the monk, bowed his head, "Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Our Father who art in heaven, do I get the saddle with that?"

In our first reading today, God tells Ezekiel something that should send chills up and down our spines. That we are responsible for the evil actions of our brothers and sisters, if we do not tell them that what they are doing is wrong. We are supposed to correct them with charity and humility. Not out in public, not yelling at them, not angry with them, we're supposed to correct them. He said, "If you don't, I will hold you responsible for their death." When God talks about death, it's not death in this life because to Him, that's nothing. He is talking about eternal death in Hell. So, He says, "You are responsible." It only makes sense because, you know, if we witness a crime and we don't report it and they find out, we're an accessory to that crime. We are guilty. So, with God, it's the same thing. If we are witnessing somebody sinning and committing evil acts and we don't correct them, we are responsible for their action. This is really bad for our society today in the United States where false tolerance is preached, the heresy of false tolerance. The heresy of, no judgement. Parents judge their children all the time, how can people say, "You can't judge me." And yet, we have a society that says, "Don't judge people." "Whatever I want is the way I want it and don't bother me." And it always ends up being in the sexual area. So, we wonder why the world fixates on that and not say, "oh, you want to murder somebody, okay, that's fine." But they don't. God tells Ezekiel this, 700 years before Jesus. And then Jesus comes along, and tells us the same thing.

Saint Paul tells us about love. True love is wanting the other person – friend or relative – to get to Heaven. If we truly love them, then we correct them, such as parents correcting children when they do wrong. Not correcting them is not loving them. Not correcting them is to really not care about them. Not correcting them is caring more about keeping the peace, something Jesus did not do.

It says in here, "If your brother sins against you." Most of the ancient manuscripts say, "If your brother sins." Period. And that is what God wants. That is what He told Ezekiel. If your brother sins, correct him or her, brother or sister. If they do not listen, get two other people or three other people, because where two or more are gathered the Holy Spirit is there and maybe the Holy Spirit can move them. Take them to the Church. There is the confessional. Tell them they need to go to the confessional. If they don't want to go to confession and still want to keep in their sinful ways, excommunicate them from the Church. That's what the gentile and tax collector treatment is. Excommunication from the Church.

Today we don't have a good exorcism rite. In the Middle Ages, it was great. You had two sets of priests lined up opposite, facing each other, and they had their hoods on, and it was dark. They had big candles that were lit, and they chanted and chanted your name, and in Latin saying "May you be damned forever, may you be sent to Hell, may you be excommunicated." And when it was over, they all took their candles, turned them upside down, dunked them in the sand, and tusshhh, total darkness. Public excommunication. Wow! Some things, makes you wonder why we got rid of them. It's interesting too, a friend of mine, when he was studying for his doctorate in Church history in Rome, he went to the Vatican archives. He reads and writes all these ancient languages. He found a card for a death novena. Praying nine days for somebody to die. Yah, I asked him for a copy of it, but he wouldn't give it to me. I collect esoteric prayers. I've got a prayer, "Our Lady of the Confederacy." What would society think today? There where Catholics on both sides. I collect all these ancient prayers, prayer types that are really different but, "No, I'm not giving it to you." My Grandfather said the same thing about the family moonshine recipe.

Today, excommunications are not public. We excommunicate ourselves by our actions. Someone who has left the Catholic church for another church has communicated themselves. Someone who is deep into mortal sin, has excommunicated themselves. The Church has several actions by which a person can excommunicate themselves. One is participating in or having an abortion. Another is hitting the Holy Father or any Bishop. Another is a priest who divulges what was heard in the confessional publically. Prior to 1983, if you hit any priest you were excommunicated. But with the new Code of Canon Law, they limited it to Bishops. I guess they don't care if we priests get hit upside the head or not. In the case of abortion, any priest in the US has been allowed to forgive that sin in the confessional. Pope Francis gave it to all the priests in the world, just recently. If you hit the Pope, he will forgive you as we witnessed with Pope John Paul II with his assassin. I haven't heard of any priest being allowed back after telling what he heard in the confessional

But Jesus is talking about not being comfortable. Being unpopular, for the salvation of a soul, for eternal life. God knows this life is nothing, compared to eternity. We say, "Oh God, I don't want to make waves in the family." "Oh Father, I don't want to be unpopular." Well, do you love your family enough? Do you really love them? That's what Saint Paul is talking about, *true love*. True love is saying, "I want you to be in Heaven." "I want you to be in Heaven for eternity." So, I'll be a little uncomfortable and make you a little mad at me, because the truth will set you free. But first, it will make you mad. Make you mad at me so that you can have eternal life in Heaven. If I truly love you, I'm going to let you know that. Our society does not preach *true love*. It preaches all kinds of false love. That's why it says, "Don't judge." Or, "Tolerate everything." No, we can't do that. Jesus didn't tolerate everything. He got angry with the Pharisees, he kicked all those guys out of the temple. He called the Pharisees, "You whitewashed tombs full of dead, men's bones." That was a big insult back then. That's like me saying, "You're the south end of a donkey, going north."

We are responsible for getting each other to Heaven and we have to do that. We have to. My sister-in-law tells her children, who are in their thirties now, who are living together without marriage, they are doing all these other things that are mortal sins, and she tells them, "No, when you go to Church, you receive communion all the time." Well, that's a mortal sin, on top of a mortal sin, on top of a mortal sin. And, I let her know that. She gets mad and doesn't want to talk to me. That's okay because I'm not married to her. But still, I care about my nieces and nephews getting to Heaven. She doesn't seem to. She has bought into this worldly stuff. We can't afford to do that, if we truly love people. If we truly love our family, our friends; we have to correct them. We have to let them know, "I love you, but you are doing this wrong, and you have got to stop, because I'm worried that you are going to have eternal life, somewhere besides Heaven." Now the popular people say, "Oh, I'm not going to go to Hell because God won't condemn me." You correct them on that too. There are a lot of misconceptions going on today. The whole thing is, it's all geared up for; are we ready? Are we ready, have we corrected ourselves first? Have we taken our lives and said, "Okay, I know what the Church teaches, I know what the ten commandments are; am I living those commandments?" Am I doing the things that the Church says I need to do so that society doesn't drag us down to the very pit of Hell? We have our chance to look at that now because people are really worried. I can't believe how many people are worried that the world is coming to an end. There's three hurricanes in the Atlantic, there's earthquakes, there's forty some forest fires up in Washington and Oregon alone. My parents were packing their bags yesterday because the fires are merging and moving towards them. So, everyone is looking east, I'm looking west. We have all these things going on and people, even Priests on the internet; this is the "End times." No it's not! The "End Times" is when God calls you from this earth and we have your funeral. That's the end times. This is cyclical, this happens all the time. Back in 1990 something, we had three storms in the Atlantic, just like we do now. We have earthquakes all the time, that's the planet. But, because we feel that way, it's a chance to say, "Okay, I'm going to get my life in order." Now of course, in Arizona that's hard, because do we have hurricanes? No. Have we had a big earthquake? Not since 1887. Have we had a tornado recently that's affected housing? Not really. So, we don't have a lot of natural disasters. Our biggest problem is high air conditioning bills. So, it's kind of hard to get prepared for eternal life when all that happens is you have to write an extra check and you get mad at APS or SRP. But, we need to look at what is going on around us. People are losing their lives, people are losing everything they have, and it's a chance for us to take stock. Am I ready? By the way, we have a jar over there on the table, if you want to make a donation for the hurricane victims, so that we can get some money to them, please feel free to do so. We have these natural disasters, these storms, these earthquakes, all these things going on. It should remind us that this life isn't it. We have eternal life. These people have to recognize and think about that now. Am I ready to die? This is something we should be asking ourselves as well.

God bless you.