

HOMILY - 13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
JULY 1, 2007

Introduction

Isn't it amazing how the cycle of biblical readings for Sundays in the Ordinary time lends itself to social analysis, to applications relevant to the events of the time and place where the Scriptures are read. Today is a very good example of this.

I

As we come up on the 4th of July we have readings that ask us to reflect on "freedom" and on "discipleship". St. Paul tells the Galatians in our second reading today that "for freedom Christ set us free"; and 'You were called for freedom, brothers and sisters'.

And Luke's Gospel for today has Jesus urging: "follow me whatever the cost: "let the dead bury their dead, you go and proclaim the Reign of God".

(The reading from the 1st Book of Kings tells of Elijah passing the mantle of prophecy to his successor Elisha.)

II

In these next few days we shall hear a lot of rhetoric about our freedoms as Americans. Some of it will be true, much of it questionable at best.

What this 4th of July ought to do is give us once again the opportunity to ask ourselves some basic questions about discipleship:

who are we really following?

whose mission are we really promoting?

are we disciples of Jesus or of the empire.,

III

The choices are stark:

The empire says; "free are the wealthy and secure".

Jesus says "Blessed are the poor in spirit".

The empire says: "free are they who never have to shed tears".

Jesus says: "Blessed are they who mourn".

The empire says: "free are the powerful".

Jesus says: "Blessed are the meek".

The empire says: "free are they who are totally self-sufficient".

Jesus says: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness".

The empire says: “free are they who have every kind of sensual and sexual experience”.
Jesus says: “Blessed are the pure of heart”.

The empire says: “free are they who wage war to protect the empire’s way of life”.
Jesus says: “Blessed are the peacemakers”.

The empire says: “free are they who live lives totally without stress”.
Jesus says: “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness”.

IV

As today’s Gospel illustrates, the cost of discipleship is high. And the enormous influence of the empire is all around us. But the price of discipleship is worth paying because it buys us true freedom – the freedom to become poor in spirit, capable of tears, seekers of justice, compassionate, integrated human beings, peace-loving and peace-seeking, and willing to risk for a cause bigger than oneself.

Conclusion

Two last points:

1. We cannot hope to be true disciples alone, but only in community. Therefore, may we offer a prayer today for ourselves, members of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, particularly during this time of Fr. Tuozzolo’s recuperation.
2. The whole world is looking at American Catholics to see if we really can live our discipleship in the heart of this most powerful empire.