

HOMILY FOR SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2007

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Introduction

Let me begin by paraphrasing Garrison Keoller who week after week on his radio show says: "It's been a quiet week in Lake Woebegone, my home town".

I

Actually, it's been a rough week here in the heart of the empire, our home town:

-we saw the Attorney General of the United States, chief law enforcement officer in the land openly accused of lying by members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

-we heard reports of astronauts charged with going aboard a space capsule prior to lift off in a state of inebriation

-Lance Corporal Pat Tillman's death in Afghanistan has been degraded from heroic, to "friendly fire", to murder by a fellow soldier

-an NBA referee is accused of collusion with Mafia types and shaving points in basketball games

-a profession football star has been indicted for extreme cruelty to dogs

-a baseball player, about to break the all-time home run record, remains under a cloud of steroid use

All of this in one week of an absolutely chaotic period in our country's history.

II

At the same time as Pope Benedict XVI last Sunday condemned as "unacceptable the horrors of useless slaughters" which war brings, our own

American bishops seem to me to have lost their voice as our civilian leaders continue to wage a futile and endless war in Iraq.

III

In the public prayer of the Church, the breviary, this past week we had this appropriate prayer from the Book of Daniel. Speaking of the situation of God's Chosen People in that inconceivable tragedy of exile, the lines read:

"We are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins. We have in our day no prince, prophet or leader, no holocaust, sacrifice, oblation or incense, no place to offer first fruits to find favor with you". (Daniel 3:36-37)

That strikes me as a pretty fair description of where our country and our church stand today.

IV

So, where do we look for Hope - that theological virtue which stands together with Faith and Charity, inspired by the Holy Spirit?

I've found consolation recently in what we just heard in today 1st Reading - Abraham calling God's attention to the very, very few righteous people who will cause God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-32).

More specifically, I find hope in each and all of you - this parish community of Our Lady Queen of Peace - and the many others that are resisting the empire, that are speaking and acting on behalf of peace and sanity in a world gone mad.

Conclusion

This presents an enormous challenge and responsibility for us. It's akin to the challenge which the Confessing Church in Germany faced during the dark days of the Third Reich.

We have to stick together. We must be part of groups like Pax Christi. Because the very soul of America is at stake.