



## ***21<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY of ORDINARY TIME YEAR C – August 25, 2019***

Today we hear from the prophet Isaiah (Is 66:18-21), how God will bring all the Hebrew brothers and sisters together again after having been scattered by their enemies. Each time the Jewish nation turned away from God, the consequences were very painful for the people and for their leaders too.

And yet, they didn't seem to learn the lessons that God wanted them to learn. They would go through cycles of acceptance and rejection of God - and the consequences of rejection were always painful.

Our second reading today (Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13) reminds us that one of the consequences of turning away from God is what St. Paul calls "discipline". God allows that to happen not because God doesn't love us. He allows It to happen precisely because He does love us.

Hindsight is always 20/20. We read the history of Israel in the bible and we notice certain patterns that repeat themselves. And we judge from a distance and say, "Won't they ever learn?"

We conclude that since we are a modern, enlightened, powerful, God fearing nation, that will never happen to us. Really?

The problem is, turning away from God as a nation doesn't happen overnight. It happens gradually - like that famous frog in the water on the stove. By the time we realize what we're doing has unintended, unacceptable consequences, it's too late. Even when we choose evil under the appearance of good, we must accept the consequences.

Can it happen here? Consider these words written in the 18th century by a man name Andrew Tytler. He writes, "A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship. Always!!!"

We look at the history of Israel in the Bible and we say, "How come they never learned that turning away from God had painful consequences?" It's a good question. Perhaps when we as a nation stand at the door and say as they did, "Lord, Lord open for us", He will say to us too, "I do not know you." Perhaps then we will understand. But will that be too late?

It's never too late. There's still time for the "frog to get out of the water". For a few moments in silence, reflect on what that means.

