

Homily Notes for Sunday July 28, 2019 – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: 1st – Genesis 18:20-32, 2nd – Colossians 2:12-14, Gospel – Luke 11:1-13

Topics: Living the will of God and the Catholic understanding on Homosexuality

1. Summary: Here we hear the familiar words “Thy will be done, thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.” Here we are challenged to obedience to the way God sees things and to build the Kingdom of God here according to His will, especially concerning the issue of homosexuality and its acceptance in our culture. See Ezekiel 33:1-9.

2. 1st reading: Abraham demonstrates persistent intercessory prayer in the face of the disobedience of the inhabitants of Sodom as they practiced homosexuality and immorality. He negotiated the Lord down to ten righteous to be found in Sodom to prevent its destruction. It appears that there were only four righteous (Lot, his cousin, Lot’s wife and their two daughters). But all the townsmen, to the last man (Gen 19:4) came and desired to molest the strangers (angels from God). They were then destroyed in what appears to have been a volcanic eruption, fire and Sulphur. This first reading demonstrates that God is patient, but will punish evildoers in many ways.

3. 2nd reading: This highlights the Good News of the Gospel, that Jesus died for our sins, so that we through faith and baptism (See Mark 16:16) and the Sacrament of Reconciliation might have all our transgressions and sins obliterated from us. This is true even when we were “dead in our sins” (Eph 2:1-10).

Through mortal sin we are deprived of sanctifying grace and we lose our standing as children of God (CCC 1468, Lk, 15:32).

This is really serious for it only takes one mortal sin to separate us from God.

But we must then remember that God loves everyone so much, that if we repent and turn to Him in faith, we can be forgiven, cleansed and healed of our sins (See 1 Tim 2:4 – “God wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth”).

4. Gospel: This is the shorter version of the Lord’s Prayer that Luke provides (See Matt 6:9-13). Following this version of the Lord’s Prayer, Today, just let us focus on the words, “Your kingdom come. (Your will be done – from longer version). How many times we pray the Lord’s Prayer and don’t really pay attention to what we are saying! **“Thy Kingdom come.” “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** How important it is to obey the will of God in order to be right with God. How serious are we? After confirmation we sang, “I have decided to follow Jesus.” Perhaps personally, internally, but are we willing to witness this to the world. A big challenge to God’s will in our day is homosexuality.

5. The issue of homosexuality in our time.

1. I submit to you that we live in an evil and degenerate time when many forms of sin and evil are tolerated.
2. We must remember that we have been given sanctifying grace in our baptism (that is the life of God in us), but that it can be lost through one unrepentant mortal sin (See CCC 1861).

Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God’s forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ’s kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act is in itself a grace offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God.

3. What is mortal sin? For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must be present: grave matter, full knowledge of the evil of the act, and full consent of the will (CCC 1855, 1857).
4. We need to be concerned about all “mortal sin” and not just certain ones, although St. Paul warns us that sexual sins have a certain seriousness because they are “against the body” (1 Cor 6:18).

“Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.”

6. In the Catechism: See 2357 – 2359. “Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life... Under no circumstances can they be approved.”

“Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.”

7. Clarity of definition: Some people say that God doesn't speak about homosexuality because that word does not appear in the Bible. Nor does “gay” appear in the Bible with the sense of homosexuality. The biblical word for this behavior is “sodomy” or “sodomite” deriving from the biblical name “Sodom”.

8. A necessary clarification: It is God's desire that all might come to repentance and be saved. We need to relate to all sinners in the best way possible to help them come around to God and be saved. But there are certain limits. See Matthew 18:15-20.

9. A Necessary Distinction: The American Bishops have a draft document from 2006 which provides some helpful guidance. We must be careful to distinguish between homosexual acts and orientation. Such acts are always condemned by the Church, though the individual's culpability for them may vary depending upon the cause. Just to have the orientation is not a sin, but is described by the Church as “objectively disordered” (CCC 2358). We always must seek the redemption of the person. A traditional church guideline from St. Augustine is to “love the person but hate the sin.” Our Bishops call on us to “treat those individuals with a homosexual inclination with “respect, compassion and sensitivity.”

10. The document goes on to state clearly that homosexual unions cannot be recognized under any form, either as “same-sex marriage” or civil unions. People practicing this lifestyle are disordered in their life and should not receive communion. Marriage is clearly defined as the union of one man and one woman, “a bond that is directed toward two inseparable ends: the expression of marital love and the procreation and education of children.” The document reiterates the Church's teaching that any sexual activity, homosexual or heterosexual, outside of marriage is morally wrong.

11. Basic Scriptural References: Gen 19; Gen 13:13; Lv 18:22 & 20:13; Isa 3:9; Ez 16:49; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Tim 1:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-10 Jude 1:7.

12. On appropriate judgment:

Matthew 7:1-5 (against hypocritical judgment)

Galatians 6:1-5 – Correct in a gentle manner.

1 Cor 5:12-13: “For why should I be judging outsiders (of the church)? Is it not your business to judge those within?”

13. On the importance of fleeing from certain occasions of sin: “When to flee and when not?”

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

([Alexander Pope](#): *Essay on Man*, Epistle II)

1 Tim 6:11 & 2 Tim 2:22 and Act of Contrition, “and avoiding the near occasions of sin.”

14. See Father Paul Key's study sheet, “The Bible and the Catechism on Homosexuality.”

15. An important summary of all research: Special Report – Sexuality and Gender by L. S. Mayer in The New Atlantis. Among other points his study shows that sexual orientation is not “fixed.” There are lots of changes in perceived sexual orientations.

16. Also remember the example of Mayor de Blasio's wife, Chirlane McCray, who identified as a lesbian in the 1970s but met and married Bill in 1994. She married the “love of my life.”

17. Practical Questions:

1. Are we willing to persevere in prayer, beseech God in prayer, when dealing with serious sin in our lives?
2. What strategies do we need to protect ourselves and others from all serious sin, including homosexuality?
3. Are we taking advantage of all the opportunities to participate in prayer, especially daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and the Liturgy of the Hours?
4. Vision of success. If we can successfully war against the sin that is in the world, we can emerge as a holy people, a protected people, a people who have a justifiable pride in ourselves and who have a reasonable assurance of salvation.
5. I also encourage you to share this information by social media. That Executive Summary is Good News for those who might feel trapped or controlled by their sexual orientation or gender identification