

Trinity 13

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) A Homily is provided for Morning and Evening Prayer A . Others are to be written.

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 17:1-15

Second Lesson: Mark 3:20-21, 31-35

Homily

From the Old Testament lesson this morning:

*"The Lord created man of the earth,
and turned him into it again.
He gave them few days, and a short time,
and power also over the things therein.
He endued them with strength by themselves,
and made them according to his image,"*

Have you ever stopped to think
-- really think --
what an amazing creation you are?
You were made from the earth,
from the natural world that surrounds you,
and were placed in the middle of it..
Like everything else in nature,
you were put here only for a little time.

Things wear out, and so will you,
but, wait, these few verses
tell us three remarkable things about ourselves:

First: We have power over the things of nature.
We are not simply controlled by what is around us,
but we can change it. We can bend it.
We can use it for our own purposes.
Which also means we can abuse it, as we have.

Second: We have strength in ourselves.
We can find ways to do things
that seem not to be possible,
to rise above what we seem to be.
We have a strength
different from what is around us,
a strength we can use wisely,
a strength with which we can do ill.

Third: We were made in the image of God.
That's no small thing.
We'll never uncover all the implications of that,
but by that knowledge we know this:
that our destiny is
to be something more than we are,
and our daily reality is to fall laughably short
of such a magnificent image.

The passage goes on to speak of the five senses,
and then of understanding, the power of reason,
and of language,
and from there that uniquely human thing,
a moral sense, and the ability to worship:

*"Withal he filled them
with the knowledge of understanding,
and shewed them good and evil. ...
And the elect shall praise his holy name. "*

God has built us in such a remarkable fashion,
has entrusted us with such great responsibility,
and has given us His Law,
written in our hearts,
in the Holy Scriptures,
and in the guidance of the Church.
And God holds us responsible for all these gifts.

*"Their ways are ever before him,
and shall not be hid from his eyes. "*

We heard from St. Mark's Gospel
how one day Jesus' brethren
and the Blessed Mother
came to call Him out of a meeting.
Perhaps they feared for His safety.

After all He was speaking so forthrightly
that it upset the powers that be,
putting him, perhaps, in some danger,
and even some of His friends
seem to have wondered if He'd gone crazy.

He said something startling.
Instead of responding to His family,
he turned to the crowd around him,
and said, "You are my family"
"Anyone that hears the Word of God,
as I am preaching it,
and obeys,
is my family."

What is he telling us?
Really, it's the same as we heard
in Ecclesiasticus.
We were created to be something special.
We bear the image of God.
Jesus came to take our human nature upon Him,
to be not only our Savior,
but our Brother.
But you have to act like part of the family
to sit down at the family table.
Remember the Prodigal son.
He was very much the son of his father,
but, so long as he abused his privilege,

so long as He ignored his father's will,
He was not treated as a son,
but wandered alone,
mourned by his father.
He came to himself.
Jesus came to show us ourselves,
both the mess we've made of ourselves,
and the promise that has always been in us.

Let's really hear Him.
Let's hear His Word,
repent and accept His grace,
partake of His sacraments,
and sit down with him as His brothers.

Let us pray.

Teach us, Lord,
to hear the words thou hast spoken.
Help us that we may hear, mark, learn,
and inwardly digest them.
Restore us to the promise thou didst give
at the foundation of the earth,
and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

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Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Hab 1:12-2:4, 14

Second Lesson: Heb 10:35-39

Homily to be written

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Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Gen 43:1-5, 11-16, 26-34

Second Lesson: Heb 13:1-21

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Deut 15:7-15

Second Lesson: Matt. 26:6-13

Homily

Money is important.

No one denies that.

Our money is the symbol of all the material things that God provides so that human life can be lived.

We work hard all our lives for that money, and it is that money with which we buy food, shelter, and clothing, all the necessities of life, and the things that gave us pleasure as well.

With money we provide for ourselves, and for our families, and that is how it should be.

But is that really all that money and the other material blessings are given to us for?

A Christian has to respond NO to that question.

There was a popular song a few years ago that listed one legitimate pleasure after another, and each time said, "If that's all there is to life, just keep dancing."

If that's all there is, it doesn't really mean much, life has no real point, and then it ends.

The lessons today are both concerned with this question, and both answer it in ways that aren't really very practical at all

We hear about a dinner party, at the house of one Simon, a leper. We don't know anything about him other than that he had a dread disease, or perhaps had been cured of the disease. He knew, at any rate, what rejection felt like. Lepers were avoided, as they say, "Like the plague".

Unlike most lepers, however, he seems to have had money, and was thus able to put on a party, with Jesus as the honored guest. Maybe Jesus had healed him. We don't know. We aren't told, but it seems a very possible thing.

At any rate, in this house where there was, or had been, such suffering, Jesus sat at table and a woman came to him. We don't know who she was.

Some have said Mary Magdalene,
 others have claimed she was a prostitute,
 but we just don't know.
 She had been saving.
 She had an expensive jar
 full of even more expensive ointment,
 that could have been sold for a lot of money,
 and, adoring, poured it on Jesus' feet.
 What a waste!
 The disciples knew better than to talk about
 how she could have supported herself
 by selling it,
 but they grumbled that the proceeds
 could certainly have been used to feed the poor.

Jesus accepted this offering of worship
 He accepted it as preparation for His burial,
 as a witness to the sacrifice He came to offer,
 for the sins of all mankind.

Now, this passage is often used
 as a justification for the huge sums
 and enormous effort spent on the worship of God;
 and it certainly should be.
 The first and great commandment,
 as we hear in the Prayer Book Mass,
 is to Love the Lord our God
 with ALL our heart, soul and mind,
 and as might we add,

with ALL our money as well.
 That is indeed.

The expensive ointment poured out on Jesus' feet
 was not wasted.
 The woman knew that,
 even though His closest friends did not.
 A great deal of expense had gone into
 the building of the Temple,
 and Temple worship was expensive.
 That was only right.
 Wonderful buildings,
 costly vestments,
 vessels of precious metal,
 and beautiful works of art
 are part and parcel of the worship
 of the Holy Catholic Church,
 and that is only right.
 Our God is to be worshiped with all that we have.

But hear Jesus well,
"The poor you have always with you."
 He was quoting the Book of Deuteronomy,
 the same book that gives instructions
 for the elaboration of Temple worship,
 that, without being stingy with formal rites,
 there is more to worship than just these:
*"If there be among you a poor man ...
 thou shalt not harden thine heart,*

*nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:
 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, ...
 Thou shalt surely give him,
 and thine heart shall not be grieved
 when thou givest unto him:
 because that for this thing the LORD thy God
 shall bless thee in all thy works,
 and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.
 For the poor shall never cease out of the land:
 therefore I command thee, saying,
 Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to
 thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.”*

It matters how we use our money.
 God holds us responsible for our stewardship,
 for our management of all that He has given us;
 and, yes, we are expected to use it wisely,
 but the wisdom of God requires of us
 that it not be spent only on what seems practical,
 but that some of it appear to the practical mind
 to be wasted;
 that some of it be used in ways that seem
 foolish to the material-minded,
 for the splendor of the worship of God;
 and that some of it be simply given away
 to those who have less,
 some of whom have already proven
 that they won't manage it well.

You see, God provides for our needs,
 and He also provides us with the ability
 to worship Him, both directly,
 and through the poor, the sick, the distressed,
 those in whom Jesus said we will meet Him.

Let us pray.

O God, Almighty and merciful, who healest those
 that are broken in heart, and turnest the sadness of
 the sorrowful to joy; Let thy fatherly goodness be
 upon all that thou hast made. Remember in pity such
 as are this day destitute, homeless, or forgotten of
 their fellow-men. Bless the congregation of thy poor.
 Uplift those who are cast down. Mightily befriend
 innocent sufferers, and sanctify to them the
 endurance of their wrongs. Cheer with hope all
 discouraged and unhappy people, and by thy
 heavenly grace preserve from falling those whose
 penury tempteth them to sin; though they be troubled
 on every side, suffer them not to be distressed;
 though they be perplexed, save them from despair.
 Almighty God, whose loving hand hath given us all
 that we possess; Grant us grace that we may honour
 thee with our substance, and remembering the
 account which we must one day give, may be
 faithful stewards of thy bounty; through Jesus Christ
 our Lord. *Amen.*

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Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Deut 14:10-29

Second Lesson: Luke 10:23-37

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 2 Sam 18:1, 6-14, 19-33

Second Lesson: Acts 16:16-34

Homily to be written