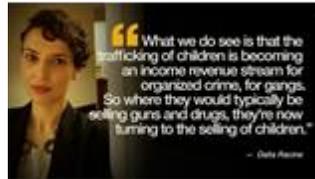


Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith in Laity Corner



Lent 3
Monday, March 05, 2018

Year 2/Cycle B
Ex. 20: 3-7/ Jn. 4:5-42

God Will Hold These

During the public ministry of Jesus, He always reminded people of His purpose – to do the Will of His Father and to allow us to capture a glimpse of the love God has for all of us. The 3rd Sunday of Lent allow us to see that without guidelines we will destroy ourselves. The newly freed Israelites needed to have limits on their behavior and attitude towards God and then how to treat each other. God sent with Moses the 10 commandments so that there were some restrictions and parameters as Jews related to the God of their Salvation and how they could live in peace. Yes, these rules which have been incorporated into the laws and decrees in every nation in our modern times; yet, it has not deterred us from ignoring and at times denying the existence of God and to treat others with contempt.

Our understanding of God comes from the fact that He is our Creator and we live, move and exist only with His permission. God turns His back on us we die!

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex. 20:2)

Our life on this earth is bounded by His dictates and His alone. How often do people come to terms with this essential fact? How often we forget and act as if the ability to change what has been designed for us by God, before the beginning of time, is under our control. We only stop in our tracks, when the news of someone we spoke to or saw an hour or a day ago, collapsed and dies. Suddenly the truth ‘smacks’ us to face the fact, that God is in the command seat.

Our society has beaconed us to have everything that is new, shiny, innovative and novel within our grasps. There is little regard for whether we really need this item or does it distract us from time with God....

“You shall not have other gods beside me” (Ex. 20:3)

In the world of today, the shiny objects are so stealthily laid out, we become possessed by them long before we can realize it. Just think of the opioid epidemic, gun violence, gang formation, and the list is lengthy. In all of these activities, God has been replaced by the need to demonstrate ones' loyalty to an object or a person who is not GOD. He stated that nothing must come between our love for Him and our lives. We tend to miss this reality..... How often do we allow a romantic relationship replace our focused love for God, how often do we permit our ego to claim a promotion, supersede the need to love God? How often do we allow our physical bodies to compete with our attention for God? How often do we see all around us the need to maintain a position of power, regardless the cost to our values and our need to promote justice?

“For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, (Ex. 2:5)

It is one thing to think of God's jealousy when He is not given the rightful place in our lives, yet for me, the most fearful and sobering reality is the next few lines.

*“Inflicting punishment for their ancestors
wickedness on the children of those who hate me,
down to the third and fourth generation,” (Ex. 20:5)*

Your distance from God, your ability to put your priorities first whether it is money, fame, power, physique and neglect the honoring of God will affect your life and then go on to affect your lineage from one generation to the next. We may not want to work on our relationship with God for ourselves, but it will affect family still to come, is not a legacy we need to leave.

One other thought, which lingers is that from the 4th to 10th commandment focuses on our treatment towards those around us and those whom we indirectly affect. Does our justice system support true justice? Do our inner prejudices cast others as second rate citizens and therefore, are treated as such? How much do our instituted laws create level financial opportunities for as many people as possible? Jesus had a special place in His heart for the treatment of children. He made this fateful pronouncement on those who take advantage of children. It is of major concern for our existence on the earth, and for the mental and psychological health of generations to come. The data and statistics make a fearful statement on the state of our modern society.

“One unforeseen consequence of the rise of the internet has been an explosion in the illicit trade of child sexual abuse images and videos.”

“25 million images are reviewed by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children annually.

That’s 480,769 images per week.”

<https://www.wearethorn.org/>

This is a dark reality of our times, a scourge which will disconnect us immediately with our relationship with God, our family and impact us for generations to come. There is no more urgent a tragedy than this, which can destroy us all. We may pretend that there is little interest in the plight of innocent children, who are trafficked, enslaved, sold into the sex trade, child pornography industry some as young as 2 years old. It does not always make headline news or scream on our Facebook page, or is the center of our Twitter feed, yet this is a painful thorn that God will hold on all of us, as our silence, our distance, turning a blind eye, or secret participation will be the sin against our neighbor, which Jesus describes this way.

“And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,

it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck

and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” (Mt. 18:5-6)

May we have a heart and an urgency to pray, to fight against child molestation, sexual exploitation of children, enslavement of children in our society, may we make a real effort to educate ourselves to reach out and help. May this season of fasting lead us to empowerment and action.

Faith in Laity Corner is a weekly review of Sunday's reading written by
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