

HOMILY FOR THE THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
Sunday, 10 November 2024

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflectiaon on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 155

Reading I 1 Kgs 17:10-16

In those days, Elijah the prophet went to Zarephath.
As he arrived at the entrance of the city,
a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her,
"Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink."
She left to get it, and he called out after her,
"Please bring along a bit of bread."
She answered, "As the LORD, your God, lives,
I have nothing baked;
there is only a handful of flour in my jar
and a little oil in my jug.
Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks,
to go in and prepare something for myself and my son;
when we have eaten it, we shall die."
Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid.
Go and do as you propose.
But first make me a little cake and bring it to me.
Then you can prepare something
for yourself and your son.
For the LORD, the God of Israel, says,
'The jar of flour shall not go empty,
nor the jug of oil run dry,
until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'"
She left and did as Elijah had said.
She was able to eat for a year,
and he and her son as well;
the jar of flour did not go empty,
nor the jug of oil run dry,
as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The LORD keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed,
gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets captives free.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The LORD gives sight to the blind.

The LORD raises up those who were bowed down;
the LORD loves the just.

The LORD protects strangers.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The fatherless and the widow he sustains,
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.

The LORD shall reign forever;

your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

Reading II Heb 9:24-28

Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands,
a copy of the true one, but heaven itself,
that he might now appear before God on our behalf.
Not that he might offer himself repeatedly,
as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary
with blood that is not his own;
if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly
from the foundation of the world.

But now once for all he has appeared
at the end of the ages

to take away sin by his sacrifice.

Just as it is appointed that human beings die once,
and after this the judgment, so also Christ,
offered once to take away the sins of many,
will appear a second time, not to take away sin
but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Alleluia Mt 5:3

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Mk 12:38-44 or 12:41-44

In the course of his teaching Jesus said to the crowds,
"Beware of the scribes,
who like to go around in long robes
and accept greetings in the marketplaces,
seats of honor in synagogues,
and places of honor at banquets.
They devour the houses of widows and,
as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers.
They will receive a very severe condemnation."
He sat down opposite the treasury
and observed how the crowd
put money into the treasury.
Many rich people put in large sums.
A poor widow also came
and put in two small coins worth a few cents.
Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them,
"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more
than all the other contributors to the treasury.
For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth,
but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had,
her whole livelihood."

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

First, I ask you all to pray for president elect Trump.

Second, in light of the election, I want to pose a question for us all. It's a question we have pondered in the past, here at Saint Leo's. In fact, it's a question the Church must constantly ask itself.

The question is this: What time is it? What's going on right now in the world?

Good Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Unlike previous Councils, the point of this Council was not to proclaim any new doctrines or condemn heresies. The point of the Second Vatican Council was to discern what Pope John called "the signs of the times." We need to do this so the Church can be faithful to our mission in proclaiming the Good News.

So... what time is it? What's going on?

In 2015, Pope Francis spoke at Santa Croce in Florence to Catholics representing all the dioceses of Italy. At Santa Croce, he told us that we need to discern "the signs of the times." He also said something that bears repeating today:

We live not so much in an era of changes,
but rather in a change of eras.

I think the Pope is right. At least, he's right about us. Here in the United States, we have entered into a new era. To pretend otherwise would be foolish.

What is this new era? What name shall we give to it? I don't know. I don't think anybody knows. But we need to reflect on this change of eras in light of our faith. This is what I want to do with you today.

There are many ways of naming what is happening right now. I am only going to mention one. It has to do with technology, especially with social media.

We are being isolated from one another by algorithms over which we have little control. I know teenagers here in our parish who are not doing well, emotionally speaking. Some of them are harming themselves. We need to pay attention to this.

Moreover, we have to recognize that lots of our neighbors have a different understanding of what's going on in the world because a corporation is giving them a different news feed. We need to pay attention to this as well.

This is a new social isolation and it is dangerous for our young people and it's dangerous for our democracy.

To be clear: You don't have to agree with me about these details. But I sincerely hope you will agree that something important is coming about and it has been coming about for some time. Like Pope Francis said - we are in a change of eras.

So, this week, in order to say something to you about the election that will be helpful to you, I have been thinking about the Second Vatican Council.

Last week, I reread one of the most important documents of the entire Council: *Gaudium et Spes*. *Gaudium et Spes* is a kind of love letter to the world. And it begins memorably:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of those who follow Christ.

These are beautiful words. Yes: *Gaudium et Spes* is a kind of love letter from the Church to the world.

But also: *Gaudium et Spes* is addressed to the Church as well. And in this sense, *Gaudium et Spes* is not a love letter. It is a summons.

The Church is called by the Holy Spirit to share in the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the world. The Church must embrace the world, which is sometimes violent and sinful and very stupid. We must embrace a world that refuses to repent and believe the Good News. And the Church must embrace this world that is full of goodness and generosity, humility, tenderness and even nobility.

Now, in this country, the Church must embrace a world that is divided. We must embrace this divided world if we are ever to hope to be a blessing to the world.

But there is one more message in *Gaudium et Spes* for us today, on this Sunday after the election.

Gaudium et Spes tells us that before the Church can proclaim the Good News effectively, first, the Church must listen.

We must listen to the world.

This is what we must do here at Saint Leo's. The American Church must listen to the American people as they say very contradictory things to one another. We must listen with hearts full of faith in our Redeemer. We must listen to the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of our nation.

We must listen if we are to be faithful to the Gospel.

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Primero, les pido a todos que oren por el presidente electo Trump.

Segundo, a la luz de la elección, quiero plantear una pregunta para todos nosotros. De hecho, es una pregunta que la Iglesia debe hacerse constantemente.

La pregunta es esta: ¿Qué hora es? ¿Qué está pasando ahora mismo en el mundo?

El buen Papa Juan XXIII convocó el Segundo Concilio Vaticano en la década de 1960. A diferencia de los Concilios anteriores, el objetivo de este Concilio no era proclamar nuevas doctrinas ni condenar herejías. El objetivo del Segundo Concilio Vaticano era discernir lo que el Papa Juan llamó "los signos de los tiempos". Necesitamos hacer esto para que la Iglesia pueda ser fiel a nuestra misión de proclamar la Buena Nueva.

Entonces... ¿qué hora es? ¿Qué está pasando?

En 2015, el Papa Francisco habló en el templo de Santa Croce en Florencia a los católicos que representaban a todas las diócesis de Italia. En Santa Croce nos dijo que tenemos que discernir los signos de los tiempos. También dijo algo que vale la pena repetir hoy:

No vivimos tanto en una era de cambios,
sino más bien en un cambio de época.

Creo que el Papa tiene razón. Al menos, tiene razón con respecto a nosotros. Aquí en los Estados Unidos, hemos entrado en una nueva era. Pretender lo contrario sería una tontería.

¿Qué es esta nueva era? ¿Qué nombre le daremos? No sé. No creo que nadie lo sepa. Pero tenemos que reflexionar sobre este cambio de época a la luz de nuestra fe.

Así que, esta semana, para decirles algo sobre las elecciones que les sea útil, he estado pensando en el Concilio Vaticano II.

La semana pasada, releí uno de los documentos más importantes de todo el Concilio: *Gaudium et Spes*. *Gaudium et Spes* es una especie de carta de amor al mundo. Y comienza de manera memorable:

Los gozos y las esperanzas, las tristezas y las angustias de los hombres de nuestro tiempo, sobre todo de los pobres y de cuantos sufren, son a la vez gozos y esperanzas, tristezas y angustias de los discípulos de Cristo.

Son palabras hermosas. Sí: *Gaudium et Spes* es una especie de carta de amor de la Iglesia al mundo.

Pero también: *Gaudium et Spes* está dirigida también a la Iglesia. Y en este sentido, *Gaudium et Spes* no es una carta de amor. Es una llamada.

La Iglesia está llamada por el Espíritu Santo a compartir en los gozos y las esperanzas, las tristezas y las angustias del mundo. La Iglesia debe abrazar al mundo, que a veces es violento y pecador y muy estúpido. Debemos abrazar a un mundo que se niega a arrepentirse y a creer en la Buena Nueva. Y la Iglesia debe abrazar a este mundo que está lleno de bondad y generosidad, humildad, ternura e incluso nobleza.

Ahora, en este país, la Iglesia debe abrazar a un mundo que está dividido. Debemos abrazar este mundo dividido si queremos ser una bendición para el mundo.

Pero hay un mensaje más en *Gaudium et Spes* para nosotros hoy, este domingo después de las elecciones.

Gaudium et Spes nos dice que antes de que la Iglesia pueda proclamar la Buena Nueva de manera efectiva, primero debe escuchar.

Debemos escuchar al mundo.

Esto es lo que debemos hacer aquí en Saint Leo's. La Iglesia estadounidense debe escuchar al pueblo estadounidense cuando se dice cosas muy contradictorias entre sí. Debemos escuchar con corazones llenos de fe en nuestro Redentor. Debemos escuchar las alegrías y las esperanzas, las penas y las ansiedades de nuestra nación.

Debemos escuchar si queremos ser fieles al Evangelio.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?